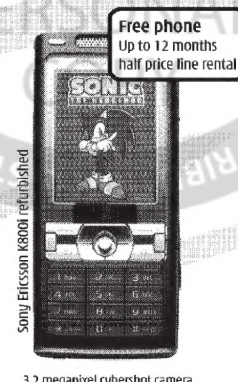
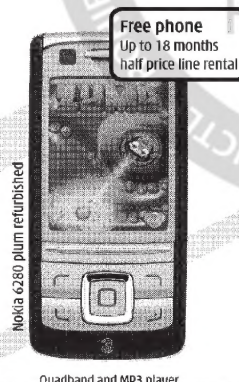
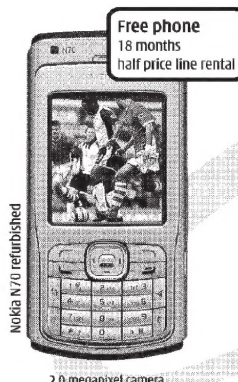
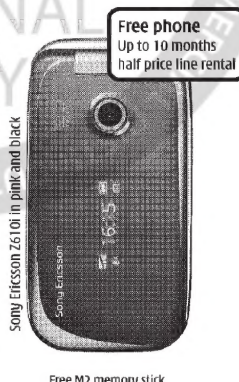
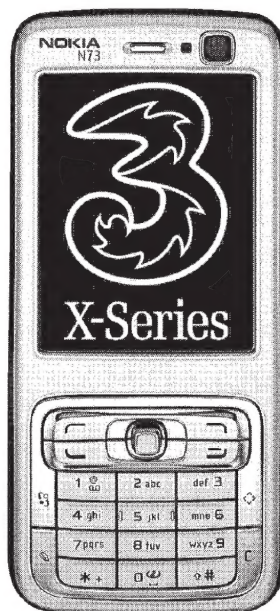


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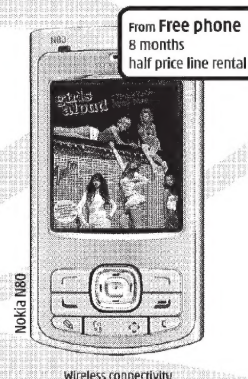
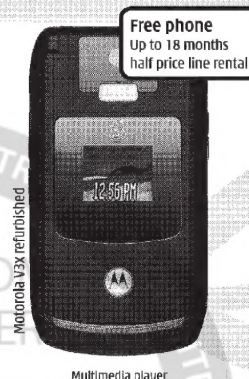


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DAILY STAR SATURDAY

+++SPORTS EXTRA+++

TXT MANIACS

Text Dssport followed by a space, then your name and comment, and send to 82100. Texts cost 25p plus your normal mobile operator cost.

TEXT DSSPORT TO 82100

Just heard that Leeds r after tom cruise 4 nrt manager coz its a mission impossible ha-ha goin down comedy club. **Shoreham Girl**

to all u celtic mugs if we league, may b ur turn up this time. **NORTH STAND CHELSEA**

hello kopites evrywhere. no cocky bts now your loosing eh ladz? 5x defeats: ha ha. **ginger lion**

our anfield boys ave already won cup this season-community shield! what av rest of u won??? **adolf pearce**

hope man u win league coz there magic to watch money is excellent but carrick a bad bad he's poor. We hate Leeds. **Canon manor blade**

WHY DOES MCCLAREN WANT SCHOLLES BACK IN SQUAD HE WONT DROP LAMPARD SO WHERE WOULD HE PUT HIM TEAM SHOULD BE PICKED BY SELECTORS JUST LIKE CRICKET. DAN K

reply 2 whitechurch so celtic took 7000 2 udt yeah, the mugs came by taxi 2 us pre season. **SW CHELSEA**

man u are hopeless in cup much! Arsenal n spurs so much better! **wayne n ollie**

Mick Tyke has all that in loving with family made you stupid? Our Barmy Army is famous ask any club! Up the Owls. **Hillsborough loyal**

oh wondrous wondrous Danny H. You have made our xmas come early. Well done Della. Peter?? Dole queue by Feb. **blueboy**

Why is nobody slaggin the famous prestyn north end. watch out u prem lot were comin get u dingles r stayin down. **maspy PNE 4 LIFE**

laugh at Leeds while it lasts unlike you whatever happens we'll be marching on together. **lufe ben**

why do u never see a mackern with a suntan?

Cause they are always in our shadow. **dafnufc**

if ya hairy n ya scarey n mad azza monkey join r footy club. welcome aboard lady. 4get arsenal, up da yetis. **big foot rovers.**

only way 2 stop footballers from running 2 the ref when he blows 4 a free or 2 book a player the 1st player 2 object get a yellow card or red. **baby avid**

To stokiemark. Cardiff going up this year son. Hows your HOME terrace by the way?! **The Sheepsheepers**

jermaine defoe wants to know why he didnt go to the world cup. how many goals have u got in the league thats why get a grip defoe and wake up. **terry**

ref wayne n ol, U silly piggyur london teams r the classless n most disrespectful! **dave m**

WHY WOULD WE BE LOOKIN FOR ANOTHER MANAGER WHEN WEVE GOT THE BEST IN THE LEAGUE, YOU SUPPORT A GLORYFIED PUB TEAM! WHITEVINE KIPPAX

I reckon a team's kit sez a lot about that team... Spurz's BROWN, enuf said. **Afc Raf**

Xmas offer dvd of all liverpools premier league titles (16 blank discs) ha ha. **Goz mufc**

2 tom huyton red: u left ur handbag n lipstick at r last club meetin luv c u nrt wk. **kop pink crew**

to steve thic what are you 12? save your pocket money and stop texting in your pathetic texts you typical spurs moron, your team are sad like your fans. **alec**

lufe19 u mugs couldnt batter a stickback conference 4 u soon has been. **WISEBLADE**

well done celtic for getting through 2 the knockout stages. **Archie**

to Hacky owl (de da) wot u no about footy stick to farming! **jan b.t.c**

PUT AN ENZ TO WEAK FIGHTS



BOXING CLEVER with KEVIN FRANCIS

WBO world cruiserweight champion Enzo Maccarinelli has hit out at domestic rival David Haye and told him to stop climbing into the ring against "weak" opponents.

Londoner Haye became the WBC's No.1 contender for O'Neil Bell's world titles when he knocked out Italian Giacobbe Fragomeni in the ninth round of their European title fight last month.

Climb

But Welsh ace Maccarinelli, who is in training for a March 3 Millennium Stadium bout against an as yet unnamed opponent, believes Haye's climb through the ranks is down to some clever management and weak opponents.

He said: "I think his record of 19 wins and one loss has been padded out a bit by fights against weaker fighters."

"He hasn't been in the ring with someone like me, despite Frank Warren trying to make the fight."

"Fair play, he has done well for himself and climbed the rankings. But I think he has avoided most of the good names," Maccarinelli was, however, impressed by Haye's determination



EASY MEAT: Haye (right) on his way to beating Giacobbe Fragomeni last month

in seeing off Fragomeni and would relish the chance to face the winner of his clash with Jamaican Bell in a unification bout.

He added: "He proved he had heart and could take a punch, which he needed to prove, but he didn't have much coming at him."

"But he fought a great fight and those who said he had stamina problems were proved wrong," Regarding his own fight future,

Maccarinelli said: "I don't care who they put in front of me. I just want to fight."

"If it's Bell, then great. I believe we are the two best in the world in this division."

"If it's Haye, then fantastic. He is a good fighter, he's British, and we would be fighting for a unified title."

EMAIL news and views to: kevin.francis@dailystar.co.uk

WIN tickets to Newcastle v Reading

YOU already get a real kick out of our fantastic footie pages. Now here's another one - the chance to watch a brilliant Barclays Premiership game for free!

Your soccer-draft Daily Star has teamed up with our mates at Premiership title sponsors Barclays to give away a pair of tickets to a lucky reader every week of the season.

And what a sizzler we've got up for grabs on Wednesday night when Newcastle take on rampant Premiership new boys Reading at St James's Park. With two such exciting



sides it's bound to be a cracker and YOU could be there.

All you have to do to try to win a pair of tickets for the match is answer this simple question:

Who is the Newcastle manager? Now ring our hotline 0906 751 3071 leaving your answer, your name, address and a daytime telephone number by midnight tomorrow (Sunday).

Or you can text **PREMIER** followed by your answer, name and details to 88100.

Calls cost 75p per minute from a BT landline (average call length 2.5 mins). Texts cost £1.50 plus your usual text tariff.

Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received by midnight tomorrow.

For all SMS text services you may receive other related promotional offers or services. To stop receiving please send STOP to 88100. Normal Daily Star rules apply.

TODAY
FOOTBALL - Arsenal v Tottenham (Sky Prem Plus pvt, 12.30pm, KO 12.45pm), Middlesbrough v Manchester United (Sky Prem Plus pvt, 5pm, KO 5.15pm), Italian Serie A (Setanta Sports 1, 7.15pm), Football First (SS1, 8.25pm), Spanish La Liga (SSX, 8.30pm), Match of the Day (BBC1, 10.15pm).
CRICKET - Australia v England (SS1, 4am/12midnight/highlights, 6pm/8pm, 11pm).
RUGBY UNION - Sale Sharks v Llanelli Scarlets (BBC1, 2pm, KO 2.30pm).
SNOOKER - Premier League (SS2, 7pm).
HORSE RACING - Sandown Park & Wetherby (C4, 2pm).
TENNIS - Davis Cup (SSX, 11am).
BOXING - Ronald Wright v Ike Quartey (SS3, 2am).
GENERAL - Grandstand (BBC1, 1pm).

TOMORROW
FOOTBALL - The Championship (ITV, 10am), Salisbury City v Nottingham Forest (BBC1, 1pm, KO 1.10pm), Falkirk v Rangers (Setanta Sports 1, 1pm, KO 2pm), Everton v West Ham (SS1, 3pm, KO 4pm), Spanish La Liga (SS1, 8pm), Match of the Day 2 (BBC2, 10pm).
CRICKET - Australia v England (SS1, 4am/12midnight/highlights, 6pm/8pm, 10.45pm), South Africa v India (SS2, 4pm).
RUGBY UNION - South Africa v World XV (SS3, 3pm).
GRIDIRON - NFL (SSX, 6pm/C5, 1.10am).
TENNIS - Davis Cup (SSX, 10am).

MONDAY
FOOTBALL - Manchester City v Watford (SS1, 7.30pm, KO 8pm).
CRICKET - Australia v England (SS1, 4am/12midnight/highlights, 6pm/8pm, 11.20pm).

TUESDAY
FOOTBALL - Chelsea v Levski Sofia



(ITV, 7.30pm, KO 7.45pm), Galatasaray v Liverpool (ITV4, 7.30pm, KO 7.45pm), Champions League (SS2, 7pm/SSX, 7.30pm), Champions League highlights (ITV, 11pm).
CRICKET - Australia v England (SS1, 4am/highlights, 6pm/8pm, 11.20pm).
WEDNESDAY
FOOTBALL - Man United v Benfica (SS2, 6pm, KO 7.45pm), Porto v Arsenal (SSX, 7.30pm, KO 7.45pm), Copenhagen v Celtic (Sky Sports Interactive, KO 7.45pm).
CRICKET - New Zealand v Sri Lanka (SSX, 4.45pm).

THURSDAY
GOLF - Dunhill Championship (SS1, 11.30am/highlights, 8pm), Barbados World Cup (SS1, 5pm/highlights, 10pm).
CRICKET - New Zealand v Sri Lanka (SSX, 9.30pm).

FRIDAY
FOOTBALL - Victory Shield (SS1, 8pm), GOLF - Dunhill Championship (SS1, 11.30am/highlights, 8pm), Barbados World Cup (SS1, 5pm).
RUGBY UNION - Bourgneon v Leicester Tigers (SS2, 7pm, KO 7.30pm).
CRICKET - New Zealand v Sri Lanka (SSX, 9.30pm).
BOXING - Lee Meager v Jon Thaxton (SS1, 10pm).

5 FOR FUN

1. Name the Republic of Ireland striker who took his international total to 29 when he scored a hat-trick against San Marino recently.
2. Which Dutch international is the current captain of Middlesbrough FC?
3. Whose racing colours were blue, buff stripes, blue sleeves, black cap and gold tassels?
4. Where in Canada will the 2010 Winter Olympics be held?
5. Which BC is a wrestling hold, where one fighter sits on the back of the other, with legs tucked under his arms?

ANSWERS: See Page 69

SPORTWORD

- ACROSS**
1. European Cup Winners Cup winners in 1983 (8)
 6. Glamorgan and England spinner (5)
 7. Monica, winner of nine Grand Slam tennis singles titles (5)
 9. The, nickname of 1 across (4)
 10. Lady, winner of the Oaks in 1991 (3,3)
 12. Kiawah, Ryder Cup venue in 1991 (6)
 14. Tap On, winner of the 2,000 Guineas in 1979 (4)
 17. Sunderland FC manager (5)
 18. Birmingham City and England centre back (5)
 19. Welsh rugby's Scarlets (8)
- DOWN**
2. Thomas, first Danish golfer to play in the Ryder Cup (5)
 3. Fuchs, twice women's javelin Olympic champion (4)
 4. Chelsea and Ghana midfielder (6)
 5. Luc, PSV, Aston Villa and Belgium forward (5)
 6. Andy, Somerset and England fast bowler (7)
 8. Town, football club now managed by Paul Sturrock (7)
 11. Mortimer, ladies singles champ at Wimbledon in 1961 (6)
 13. John, West Ham and Ipswich Town manager (5)
 15. Stadium, Bradford sporting venue (5)
 16. McKenzie, boxing world champion at three weights (4)

CALL 0906 751 3122 FOR TODAY'S SOLUTION. Calls cost 75p per min from a BT landline. Turn to Page 69 for yesterday's answers.



TODAY

(3pm unless stated)

Barclays Premiership

- Arsenal v Tottenham (12.45)
- 1 Blackburn v Fulham
- 2 Chelsea v Newcastle
- Middlesbrough v Man Utd (5.15)
- 3 Portsmouth v Aston Villa
- 4 Reading v Bolton
- 5 Sheff Utd v Charlton
- 6 Wigan v Liverpool
- Coca-Cola Championship
- 7 Birmingham v Plymouth
- 8 Cardiff v Colchester
- 9 Coventry v Stoke
- 10 Crystal Palace v QPR
- 11 Hull v Southampton
- 12 Ipswich v Burnley
- 13 Leeds v Barnsley (12.00)
- 14 Leicester v Sheff Wed
- 15 Luton v Preston
- 16 Southend v Wolves
- 17 Sunderland v Norwich
- 18 West Brom v Derby

Coca-Cola League One

- Rotherham v Yeovil

Coca-Cola League Two

- Accrington v Shrewsbury

FA Cup Second Round

- Aldershot v Basingstoke (2.00)
- 19 Barnet v Northampton
- 20 Bradford v Millwall
- Brighton v Stafford Rangers
- Bristol Rovers v Bournemouth
- Bury v Chester
- 21 Darlington v Swansea
- Hereford v Port Vale (1.00)
- 22 King's Lynn v Oldham
- Macclesfield v Hartlepool
- 23 Mansfield v Doncaster
- Milton Keynes Dons v Blackpool
- 24 Rushden & Diamonds v Tamworth
- 25 Salisbury v Nottm Forest

(Postponed, being played tomorrow)

Scunthorpe v Wrexham

- Stockport v Wycombe
- 27 Swindon v Morecambe
- 28 Torquay v Leyton Orient
- 29 Tranmere v Peterborough

Nationwide Conference

- Altrincham v Burton Albion
- Cambridge Utd v St Albans
- 34 Red & Red v Southport
- Forest Green v York
- Gravesend v Kidderminster
- Halifax v Woking
- Stevenage v Oxford Utd
- Weymouth v Grays Athletic

Scottish Premier League

- 30 Celtic v Aberdeen
- 31 Hibernian v Dundee Utd
- 32 Inverness CT v Motherwell
- 33 Kilmarnock v Dunfermline
- 34 St Mirren v Hearts

Scottish First Division

- 35 Clyde v Aldrie Utd
- 36 Dundee v Ross County
- 37 Gretna v St Johnstone
- 38 Hamilton v Livingston
- 39 Partick v Queen of South

Second Division

- 40 Alloa v Raith
- 41 Ayr v Brechin
- 42 Cowdenbeath v Stranraer
- 43 Morton v Forfar
- 44 Peterhead v Stirling

Third Division

- 45 Albion v Dumbarton
- 46 Arbroath v Stenhousemuir
- 47 Berwick v Elgin
- 48 East Fife v Queens Park
- 49 East Stirling v Montrose

TOMORROW

Barclays Premiership

- Everton v West Ham (4.00)

FA Cup Second Round

- Bristol City v Gillingham (1.00)
- Salisbury v Nottm Forest (1.10)

Scottish Premier League

- Falkirk v Rangers (2.00)

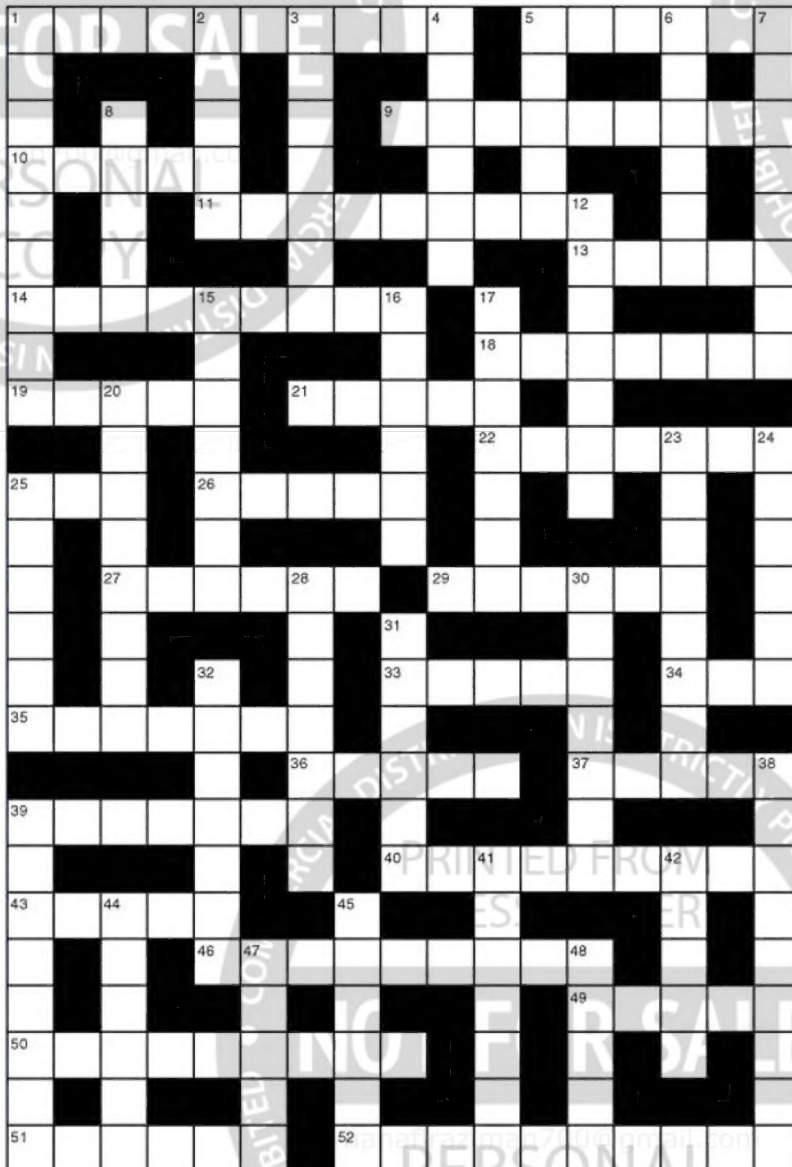
GIANT CROSSWORD

WIN £25

SEND your answers, name and address to: Giant Soccerword, Daily Star Sports Desk, 10 Lower Thames Street, London, EC3R 6EN. Entries by first post Friday. First correct one drawn will receive £25. Last week's winner was Mr GT Carter of Hartlepool.

ACROSS

- United, European Champions League winners in 1999 (10)
- Ashley, Eire defender who won an FA Cup winners medal as a 1 across substitute in 1983 (6)
- Peter, goalkeeper previously with Bury and Liverpool, who made 137 League appearances for Oldham 1978-82 (9)
- Burnley and Wales goalkeeper (5)
- Jamie, Crystal Palace's former Ipswich, Leicester, Coventry and England under-21 forward (9)
- Arsenal and England under-21 defender formerly on-loan to Sunderland (5)
- Sean, Doncaster's former Bournemouth manager (18)
- Mike, defender also with Arsenal, Plymouth and Brighton, who made 207 League appearances for Northampton 1961-67 (7)
- Middlesbrough's former Wimbledon, Charlton and England under-21 forward (5)
- Billy, striker capped 25 times by Scotland 1996-2001, whose clubs include Dundee United and Rangers (5)
- Lee, Everton and Eire midfielder (7)
- Park, home of Motherwell (3)
- Tranmere Rovers manager (5)
- Brent, Gillingham and Trinidad defender previously with Dundee (6)
- Stuart, midfielder whose previous clubs included Bolton who joined Brighton from Exeter in 1995 (5)
- England under-21 goalkeeper who won League Championship medals with Arsenal in 1989 and Leeds in 1992 (5)
- Camp, home of Barcelona (3)
- County, then Football League club who reached the European Cup Winners Cup quarter-finals in 1981 (7)
- Bakke, Leeds and Norway midfielder (5)
- Malbranque, Spurs forward formerly with Fulham (5)
- Prior, Southend defender whose previous clubs include Cardiff and Norwich (7)
- Nathan, West Brom's former Bristol Rovers and Wigan striker (9)
- Jaidi, Birmingham and Tunisia defender (5)
- England forward who won two European Champions League winners medals with Real Madrid (9)
- Dave, half back later with Crewe, who won an FA Cup winners medal with Manchester City in 1956 (5)
- See 5 down
- Morocco defender who joined Spurs from Deportivo La Coruna in 2004 (6)
- Tony, manager of Stoke City 1960-77 (10)



DOWN

- Middlesbrough and Italy striker (9)
- Kevin, midfielder previously with Chelsea who made 300 League appearances for Leyton Orient 1983-93 (5)
- Liverpool and Mali midfielder (7)

- Hamilton, Colombia forward who joined Middlesbrough from Deportivo Cali in 1998 (6)
- and 50 across. Leeds striker whose previous clubs include Fulham and WBA (5,9)
- Andy, Blackburn Rovers forward capped 17 times by Eire 1961-67 (6)
- Trond Egil, Norway midfielder who joined Southampton from Coventry in 1999 (8)
- Mark, Peterborough goalkeeper (5)
- Henry, Arsenal and France striker (7)
- The, nickname of Macclesfield Town (7)
- Joe, Cardiff and Wales forward (6)
- Joleon, Everton's former Wolves and England under-21 defender (7)
- Norwich City and Wales striker (8)
- Dennis, Swansea and Trinidad defender previously with Wrexham (8)

- Middlesbrough and Nigeria striker previously with Portsmouth (6)
- Rory, Swansea forward previously with Barnsley and Swindon (6)
- The, nickname of Luton Town (7)
- Fernando, Holland defender who joined Rangers from AZ Alkmaar in 2000 (7)
- Steve, Scotland defender previously with St Mirren who won an FA Cup winners medal with Chelsea in 1997 (6)
- Julian, Darlington's

- former England under-21 forward whose previous clubs include Coventry and Boston United (7)
- Full back who captained Sheffield Wednesday's 1966 FA Cup final team and who managed Bristol Rovers 1972-77 (3,6)
- Celtic manager (8)
- Chelsea and England midfielder (7)
- Frank, goalkeeper whose previous clubs include Blackburn and Swindon, who joined Wycombe in 2002 (5)
- Mitch, England

- under-21 striker who made 211 League appearances for Ipswich 1979-90 (15)
- Stuart, forward whose previous clubs include Everton and Tranmere, who joined Bury from Stockport in 2005 (6)
- Hill, Stoke City's former Tranmere and Oldham defender (5)
- Pat, forward capped 28 times by Scotland 1986-96, whose clubs included Chelsea and Tranmere (5)

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Leboeuf, 4 Pritchard, 7 Neville, 9 Sproson, 11 Raven, 13 Robben, 15 Bayview, 18 Carlton Cole, 20 Myers, 21 Bryan King, 24 Greig, 25 Bramall Lane, 27 Cadamarteri, 30 Eyles, 32 Seasiders, 34 Nicol, 36 Swindon Town, 38 Radford, 40 Crespo, 42 Halle, 44 Windass, 47 Airdrie, 48 Gerry Ryan, 49 Lowndes.

DOWN: 1 Laws, 2 Otto, 3 Finnan, 4 Pavel, 5 Cherry, 6 Rose, 8 Lisbie, 10 Parma, 12 Newcastle, 14 Batty, 16 Ince, 17 Doriva, 18 Chung, 19 Immel, 22 Reina, 23 Gradi, 25 Baros, 26 Layer, 27 Cornforth, 28 Mills, 29 Eranio, 31 Swain, 33 Ernie, 35 Cold, 36 Sadler, 37 Woods, 39 O'Leary, 40 Cowell, 41 Veron, 43 Arie, 45 Dean, 46 Sims.

FOOTBALL TRIVIA

Compiled by ALEX MURPHY



TON-UP HEROES:
For which countries have George Popescu (left) and Claudio Reyna appeared more than 100 times?



ON THIS DAY

- On December 2 in...
1 ... 1997, who lost a stormy Div 2 match 3-0 at Wigan after finishing with just seven men?
2 ... 1998, which Australian striker joined Celtic from Croatia Zagreb for £3m?
3 ... 1999, who took the manager's job at Sheffield United?
4 ... 2004, who took over as Scotland manager?
5 ... 2005, who quit as Southampton boss?

CENTURY MAKERS

- For which countries have these players made more than 100 appearances?
1 Marcel Desailly, 116 caps, 1993-2004
2 George Popescu, 115, 1988-2003
3 Frank de Boer, 112, 1990-2004
4 Rustu Recber, 112, 1994-2006
5 Claudio Reyna, 112, 1994-2006

GIVE US A P

- All these begin with P
1 Knocked England out of the 2006 World Cup.
2 Managed by Ian Holloway.
3 Peterborough's nickname.
4 Play at Deepdale.
5 QPR and Man Utd full-back won 19 England caps 1989-94

ARSENAL MANAGERS

- Which ex-Arsenal players have managed these teams?
1 Bristol Rovers, 1985-87
2 Chelsea, 1985-88
3 Coventry, 1972-75
4 Fulham, 1980-82
5 Hull City, 1970-74

FAMOUS FANS

- Which Premiership teams do these sportspeople support?
1 Amir Khan
2 Darren Campbell
3 Darren Clarke
4 Kelly Holmes
5 Steve Redgrave

SUPER AFRICANS

- Which countries did these African Players of the Year represent?
1 Lakhdar Belloumi, 1981
2 Victor Ikpeba, 1997
3 Patrick Mboma, 2000
4 El Hadji Diouf, 2001 and 2002
5 Samuel Eto'o, 2003, 2004 and 2005

CHAMPIONS

- In which countries do these teams hold the record for most national titles won?
1 Steaua Bucharest, 23
2 Rosenborg, 19
3 Maccabi Tel Aviv, 18
4 IFK Gothenburg, 17
5 Shamrock Rovers, 15

ITALIAN STARS

- For which Italian teams have these players been banging in the goals this season?
1 Adrian Mutu
2 Daniele Conti
3 Francesco Totti
4 Ibrahim Bakayoko
5 Zlatan Ibrahimovic

NON-LEAGUE NAMES

- Complete the full names of these Nationwide Conference clubs.
1 Cambridge ...
2 Dagenham & ...
3 Gravesend & ...
4 Grays ...
5 York ...

WORLD CUP GOALS

- Who scored the opening goal in these World Cup Finals?
1 1966, England 4 West Germany 2 – Geoff Hurst, Helmut Haller or Martin Peters?
2 1970, Brazil 4 Italy 1 – Gerson, Pele or Luigi Riva?
3 1974, West Germany 2 Holland 1 – Paul Breitner, Gerd Muller or Johan Neeskens?
4 1978, Argentina 3 Holland 1 – Osvaldo Ardiles, Mario Kempes or Daniel Passarella?
5 1982, Italy 3 West Germany 1 – Paul Breitner, Paolo Rossi or Marco Tardelli?

ANSWERS

- 1** Bolton
2 Romania
3 France
4 Kempes
5 Ross
6 Desailly
7 Popescu
8 Haller
9 Ireland
10 Sweden
11 Israel
12 Norway
13 Romania
14 Romania
15 Champions of 1970
16 United
17 Names
18 Non-League
19 Inter Milan
20 Liverpool
21 Albion
22 Celtic
23 Tottenham
24 Italy
25 USA
26 Holland
27 Wrexham
28 Wrexham
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48 Wrexham
49 Wrexham
50 Wrexham
51 Wrexham
52 Wrexham

GONE FISHIN'

with RICHARD LEE



MONSTER:
Our man
Richard shows
off his catch



IF you're looking for a great piking water this weekend, look no further than Watermark Fisheries' Bradleys lake – and here's the proof! This 20lb 4oz predator came during a trip that I

enjoyed to celebrate the development of the venue to anglers. The 120-acre water in Cotswold Water Park is a venue of the future. Details at www.watermarkfisheries.com

Surge on Thames

FISH numbers in Britain's rivers are at their highest for 30 years.

According to Environment Agency research, stocks at waterways across the country have soared.

And the biggest success story is on the River Thames where fish numbers have rocketed by 96 per cent.

Hi-tech sonar studies at 13 sites on the river discovered 19 tonnes of fish, twice as many as in 1995 – while roach are up by almost 200 per cent.

Steve Sheriden, fish expert for the EA, told *Gone Fishin'*: "It is mind-blowing how the Thames has improved so quickly."

"This has to have been helped by the cleaner water, the downturn in pollution and a massive boost in weed growth and natural food."

CARP ace Warren Farrance is celebrating a stunning hat-trick of monster mirrors – three fish for 146lb!

Fight

The heavyweight trio weighed in at 54lb, 52lb and 40lb 4oz and came during a trip to Kent's famous Darenth complex. Fishery boss Farrance used corn and boilies and pre-baited a gravel patch to get the fish feeding.

He said: "All the fish put up a phenomenal fight and I still can't believe I caught so many big carp in one session. I'll never forget the moment."

Horne of plenty

PART-TIME angler Trevor Horne has banked one of the biggest bream of all-time.

The 19lb giant slab is one of the most sensational fish of the season.

"This proves you don't have to be a full-timer to catch a fish of a lifetime," said the Blackheath man. Fishing a secret Southern stillwater, Trevor baited it sweetcorn before casting out a tutti frutti boilie.

"The bream is bigger than anything I could have ever imagined," added Trevor.

HOTSPOTS

Coleman's Cottage, Little Braxted, Essex: Fish across to the islands for nets of carp to 130lb. Soft pellet is a deadly bait.

Octopus Boidings, Bridgnorth, Shropshire: Long pole with red maggot getting plenty of bites in the falling temperatures. Expect carp bags over 50lb.

Bury Hill, Dorking, Surrey: Target the island margins on the old lake for carp to 25lb.

Rayne Lodge, Braintree, Essex: Middle Lake for silver fish nets into double figures on pole and caster.

THE ASHES: Bell reveals how player

CHAT'S GOT US FREDDIE TO RUMBLE



IAN BELL has revealed how a dramatic soul-searching session in the team hotel spurred England to an Ashes revival.

Bell told how captain Andrew Flintoff brought his players together two nights before the second Test to let them know that a repeat of their dismal performance in the series opener at the Gabba would not be tolerated.

The meeting was set up by the players and none of the management staff, including coach Duncan Fletcher, voiced their opinion.

And it appeared to have the desired effect on the first day in Adelaide, with Bell, Kevin Pietersen and Paul Collingwood, who reached 98 at stumps, putting the tourists into a strong position.

Bell said: "We did have a meeting and it was the players who spoke. None of the management said anything, it was all coming from the team."

"There was a bit of honesty to say we were not good enough at Brisbane. That came from everyone. We all said that, from the players' point of view, this was an important day and that whether we were batting or bowling first we had to do it well."

"Every one of us had to stand up and be counted. It was the captain's idea."

"All the talk was coming from the floor and that was a good thing."

Huge

"We are here to play the best team in the world and I think sometimes you can go through things with mediocrity and say it is good enough."

"But we had to be honest and say that we were not good enough at Brisbane."

"We all wanted to come here and show people what good cricketers we are."

"There was pressure on us to show people we could still play and perform."

England breathed a huge sigh of relief when Flintoff won the toss on the first morning and decided to bat first.

Things did not really go according to plan early, with both Andrew Strauss and Alastair Cook failing to handle new Aussie threat Stuart Clark.

Strauss played a terrible shot and offered a simple catch to Damien Martyn while Cook flailed at a wide ball and edged it behind to wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist.

Having decided not to play Monty Panesar and retain an unchanged lineup, the England side were

by MARTIN ROGERS

under pressure to build a big total.

Fletcher and Flintoff will pray they do not miss Panesar's wicket-taking potential on the final day of the match.

Bell and Collingwood got the innings on track when they put on 113 for the third wicket before the Warwickshire youngster recklessly skied one to hand Brett Lee a return catch.

But that brought Pietersen to the crease and immediately the scoring rate, sluggish in the early stages, began to increase.

Collingwood was happy to nudge the ball around while Pietersen swatted away, including a huge six off a bemused Shane Warne.

Score

Off the second last ball of the day, Pietersen provided a scare when he lofted Lee high into the air but Glenn McGrath just failed to get a hand to it.

Collingwood finished two short of his hundred but was determined to remain unbeaten at the close after being heart-breakingly stumped for 96 in Brisbane.

Bell added: "It was seriously important to bounce back in this way after the first Test."

"We got to the sort of position we were looking for on day one."

"We would have liked

WIZARD OF DODGE:
Collingwood avoids a bouncer

talk helped England wipe out Gabba nightmare

ADELAIDE SCOREBOARD

England Won Toss	
England 1st Innings	
Strauss c Martyn b Clark	14
Cook c Gilchrist b Clark	27
Bell c & b Lee	60
Collingwood not out	88
Pietersen not out	60
Extras (b1 nb6)	7
Total 3 wks (90 overs)	266
Fall of wickets: 1-32 2-45 3-158	
To Bat: Flintoff, Jones, Giles, Hoggard, Harmison, Anderson.	
Bowling: Lee 20-177-1, McGrath 18-3-51-0, Clark 15-3-25-2, Warne 27-6-85-0, Clarke 10-1-27-0.	
Australia: Langer, Hayden, Ponting (c), Martyn, Hussey, Clarke, Gilchrist, Warne, Lee, Clark, McGrath.	
Umpires: S Bucknor & R Koertzen.	

LET'S KEEP RUFFLING 'EM: Pietersen congratulates Collingwood at the end of play



Read our exclusive close of play report every morning at www.dailystar.co.uk

Paul to have gone and completed his century before the close of play but he does things his way.

"He is mentally very strong and he has shown that when the going gets tough, he will get stuck in and fight for England."

"It was just pleasing for us to make the most of batting having won the toss. That was what we were looking for."

Threat

Warne and McGrath, who passed a late fitness test on his heel injury, failed to take a wicket between them and there were signs the Aussies were starting to flag.

Clark was the bowler who posed the biggest threat and he said: "England had a very decent day."

Collingwood is a very good player.

"He knows his game and sticks to it and he can be very frustrating to play against."

"It was always going to be hard work for us on a good batting pitch but we did fairly well to keep the runs down like we did."



GOT A RING TO IT: Ian Bell celebrates his 50

Barmy Army's back on song

THE Barmy Army are ready to help England fight their way back into the Ashes by wining up the Aussies.

England's fanatical supporters were reunited on day one in Adelaide after being kept apart from each other during the first Test in Brisbane.

The Adelaide Oval's two grassy hills allowed the touring supporters to sing their hearts out and generate the most intense atmosphere of the series so far.

Spoil

Aussie spinner Shane Warne came in for special stick, being on the receiving end of some specially-prepared chants.

Barmy Army founder Paul Burnham said: "Things were not as we would have wanted them in Brisbane and it seemed the security staff were determined to spoil everyone's fun."

"The atmosphere was much better

■ by MARTIN ROGERS

here and the Barmy Army was able to show what it is all about.

"We hope the support we offer can lift the players and I am sure it will have a positive impact on the team for the rest of the Test."

The travelling support can help balance the equation with the Australian media apparently desperate to try to unsettle the England team.

It has been suggested in the Aussie press that Kevin Pietersen faces an ICC rap after comments he allegedly made in a magazine interview regarding racial quotas in South African cricket.

However, such action is highly unlikely and the England camp believe the episode has merely been an attempt to distract Pietersen from the task at hand.

Macca suffers pain in Spain

■ by DAVE FERN

JEREMY McWILLIAMS is determined to bounce back from a high-speed tumble during World MotoGP testing in Spain which left him seriously injured.

The 42-year-old Belfast rider faces surgery on Monday in the hospital near the Jerez circuit where his Ilmor bike snaked out of control going into a fast left-hand bend.

McWilliams, who had been out of Grand Prix action for two seasons, was working on development of the bike for the sport's all-new team when the accident happened in the final session of the year.

Pin

He took a battering and is to undergo an operation to have a pin inserted in the left femur broken in the tumble, which also left him with a badly injured little finger on his left hand and a fractured right collarbone.

"He is remarkably upbeat and is being well taken care of," said his manager Drew Wylie.

"He reckons once the leg has been pinned he can be up and about in five or six weeks and he will want to be back on the bike."

Before the crash he had lapped the demanding 2.748-mile-circuit in 1min 44.661secs.

Local favourite Dani Pedrosa finished half a second inside the lap record in 1min 39.910, just marginally faster than arch-rival Valentino Rossi.

Bruce blocks Upson

■ by TIM GRAY

STEVE BRUCE insists it will take "one hell of an offer" for Birmingham to consider selling defender Matthew Upson in the January transfer window.

Upson is poised to make his first senior appearance for 10 months against Plymouth today.

The England defender spent two months on the sidelines with a pelvic problem before rupturing his Achilles in early April.

He is out of contract in 18 months having refused a new deal before his injuries. But Bruce will not allow him to leave on a free and is under no pressure to sell Upson in the near future.

Bruce said: "Because of the wealth of the owners (David Sullivan and David Gold), I am fortunate in not having to sell."

"Anyone who tries to buy off us has got to pay top dollar."

"They know, with the owners' wealth, they can't have us over a barrel."

TEAMTALK

BIRMINGHAM v PLYMOUTH

BIRMINGHAM midfielder Damien Johnson (fractured jaw) is still missing, as is striker Mikael Forssell (knee). David Dunn continues to be ruled out by chronic hamstring troubles. PLYMOUTH have injury doubts over Lee Hodges (knee) and Paul Connolly (hamstring). Mar Doumbe (knee) will come back into contention after missing four matches. LAST SEASON: No game. BIRMINGHAM WWDWL; PLYMOUTH LDDLW. REF: R Beeby (Nthnts)

CARDIFF v COLCHESTER

CARDIFF defender Glenn Loovens (groin) will be given a late fitness test. The Bluebirds are still without Willo Flood (knee) and Kerrea Gilbert (shoulder). AUSSIE Richard Garcia is back in contention for Colchester after a month out with an ankle injury. Ritchie Jones has completed his loan spell and returned to Manchester United. LAST SEASON: No game. CARDIFF LWLWL; COLCHESTER WLLWW. REF: M Pike (Cumbria)

COVENTRY v STOKE

COVENTRY forward Stern John (knee) could be in line for his first start in three weeks. Leon McKenzie may make way. LIAM LAWRENCE (thigh) is a midfield doubt for Stoke and may be replaced by Patrik Berger. Ricardo Fuller may be back to start in attack. LAST SEASON: Stoke 0 Coventry 1, Coventry 1 Stoke 2. LAST FIVE GAMES: Coventry LLWWD; Stoke WWWWW. REF: N Miller (County Durham)

C PALACE v QPR

PALACE will be without suspended striker James Scowcroft, while centre-half Leon Cort is still absent with a hamstring injury. QPR winger Lee Cook is doubtful after limping off in midweek against Sunderland. The Rs are still without Gareth Ainsworth (ankle). LAST SEASON: Palace 2 QPR 1, QPR 1 Palace 3. LAST FIVE GAMES: Palace LLWDD; QPR WWWLL. REF: M Dean (Wirral)

HULL v SOUTHAMPTON

UNDER-FIRE Hull boss Phil Parkinson may restore Nick Barmby, Ryan France and Andy Dawson to starting roles. Striker Steve McPhee has been out for 14 months with a knee injury but may make his long-awaited comeback. SAINTS welcome back midfielder David Prutton (ankle) for the first time this season. LAST SEASON: Hull 1 Saints 1, Saints 1 Hull 1. LAST FIVE GAMES: Hull DWLWL; Saints DDWWW. REF: L Mason (Lancs)

IPSWICH v BURNLEY

IPSWICH will be without suspended duo Dan Harding and Simon Walton. Fabian Wilnis has recovered from a hamstring strain to put himself in contention. BURNLEY manager Steve Cotterill has a doubt over Andy Gray (foot). Keeper Danny Coyne (knee) is likely to keep his place. LAST SEASON: Ipswich 2 Burnley 1, Burnley 3 Ipswich 0. LAST FIVE GAMES: Ipswich LLWLL; Burnley WLLWL. REF: K Hill (Herts)

LEEDS v BARNLEY

LEEDS boss Dennis Wise is without Hayden Foxe (ban) and Gary Kelly (back). Striker Richard Cresswell is still struggling with a knee injury. BARNLEY will be without loan duo Ronnie Wallwork and Kevie Reid through suspension. Grant McCann (dead leg) is expected to return. Captain Paul Reid (groin) is also expected to be back in contention. LAST SEASON: No game. LAST FIVE LEAGUE GAMES: Leeds LWLWL; Barnley WLLWW. REF: K Wright (Cams)

LEICESTER v SHEFF WED

LEICESTER manager Rob Kelly hopes to have captain Paddy McCarthy (knee, shoulder) back, Darren Kenton (calf) and Gareth Williams (ankle) are likely to remain sidelined. LEFT-BACK John Hills (hamstring) will miss out for the Owls. Wade Small is still banned. LAST SEASON: Sheff Wed 2 Leicester 1, Leicester 2 Sheff Wed 0. LAST FIVE GAMES: Leicester LLLLL; Sheff Wed WWLWD. REF: R Styles (Hants)

LUTON v PRESTON

THE Hatters must continue without forward Sam Parkin (ankle) and utility man Paul Underwood who is recovering from infection. PRESTON'S Sean St Ledger (head) should be fit. Fellow defenders Callum Davidson (groin and knee) and Matt Hill (hamstring) are still out. LAST SEASON: Preston 5 Luton 1, Luton 3 Preston 0. LAST FIVE GAMES: Luton LLLLL; Preston W D W D D. REF: M Jones (Cheshire)

SOUTHEND v WOLVES

SOUTHEND welcome Mark Gower back after his red card against Colchester. Mitchell Cole seems likely to make way. Kevin Maher will serve the second of a three-match ban. ON-LOAN winger Michael McIndoe could make his first start for Wolves, but Rob Edwards (dead leg) is still struggling. LAST SEASON: No game. LAST FIVE GAMES: Southend LDDLL; Wolves WLDLDD. REF: P Armstrong (Berkshire)

SUNDERLAND v NORWICH

SUNDERLAND have doubts over striker Chris Brown (ankle) and Dwight Yorke. Keeper Ben Alnwick is still missing with a shoulder injury. NORWICH boss Peter Grant could be without midfielder duo Carl Robinson (calf) and Dickson Etuhu (foot) for the trip. On-loan Derby keeper Lee Camp will continue in goal. LAST SEASON: No game. LAST FIVE GAMES: Sunderland LDWDW; Norwich WWLWD. REF: P Joslin (Notts)

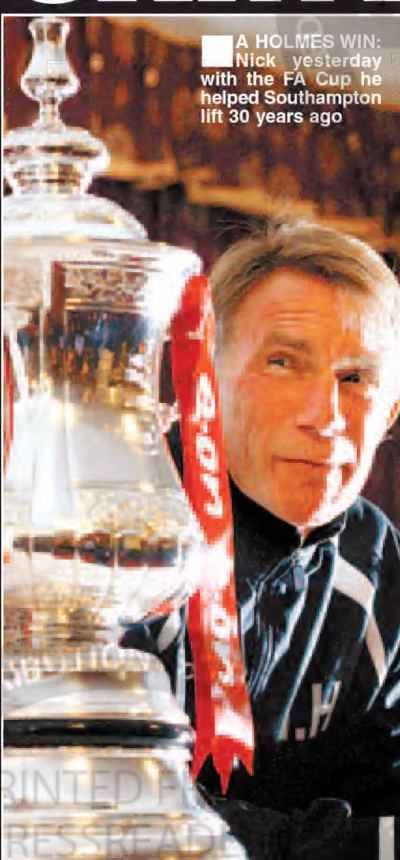
WEST BROM v DERBY

BAGGIES midfielder Nigel Quashie is struggling to overcome illness, but John Hartson could play a part after overcoming an ankle injury. DERBY manager Billy Davies is sweating on the fitness of captain Matt Oakley (calf). However, striker Paul Peschisolidi is pushing for a recall after returning to training. LAST SEASON: No game. LAST FIVE GAMES: West Brom LLWLL; Derby WWWWW. REF: P Crossley (Kent)

SERIOUSLY football

Home from Holmes as SAINT NICK

SAINT NICK



A HOLMES WIN: Nick yesterday with the FA Cup he helped Southampton lift 30 years ago

NICK HOLMES could have been sitting in the Florida sunshine sipping cocktails and counting his money.

The 52-year-old unsung hero of Southampton's incredible 1976 FA Cup Final win over Manchester United took himself off to the States 10 years ago to enjoy the warmth and good life.

But instead he's back home for another day in the Cup sun tomorrow — and relishing every moment.

Holmes, the midfield workhorse for Alan Ball, Mick Channon and Peter Osgood, will watch his

Salisbury City side take on League One leaders Nottingham Forest in the second round.

And he's more than happy in the warmth of the tiny Conference South club.

He said: "I had a good life in the States. I was running a property management business.

Hard

"But I can't say I really enjoyed it. You can only have so much of a good thing and I was starting to miss football."

"I'd been out of the game 13 years. To be honest 13 weeks is enough for you to be forgotten so I knew it would be hard to get a chance.

"But thankfully Salisbury offered me the opportunity to take over the club and it's been a great adventure since. This tie will be a bit of a milestone for how far we've come."

Salisbury were close to going bust and buried in the depths of the Dr Martens Eastern Division when Holmes came home.

Two promotions later they are live on the telly with a chance of

■ by RALPH ELLIS

knocking out the double European Cup winners.

And Holmes will summon the spirit of '76 in his team talk to his young part-timers.

He said: "I remember Lawrie McMenemy saying that people called us homely and hospitable, but forgot we were also ruthless, determined and had a lot of ability."

"I like to think that was also what I was like as a player and what I ask from my team when they go over the white line on a match day."

"Of course, I have wonderful memories from those days at Saints and that team still gets together for a reunion every five years — although sadly each time it happens now one or two are missing."

"We were so upset that Ossie was the latest to go."

"But it would be wonderful to have another special Cup memory."

"There's a much bigger gap between us and the best team in the competition at this stage than there was even between Saints

FA CUP TEAMTALK



BRISTOL R v BOURNEMOUTH

ROVERS striker Stuart Nicholson is ineligible under the terms of his loan deal from West Brom, while Richard Walker (ill) may miss out. BOURNEMOUTH midfielder Shaun Cooper looks set to start, but Callum Hart (knee) is doubtful. Loan star Simon Gillett hasn't been given permission to play, but Jack Cork, Ryan Bertrand and Matthew Connolly are free to feature.

DARLINGTON v SWANSEA

DARLINGTON captain Clark Keltie returns after a one-match ban, but on-loan duo Mark Albrighton and Anthony Griffith are cup-tied. Darren Holloway (hamstring), Ville Valsanen (groin), Joey Hutchinson (hip) and Gaetano Giallanza (knee) are also out. DEFENDER Sylvain Meslien could make his Swansea debut. Dennis Lawrence (neck) should also feature, but on-loan Ian Craney is cup-tied.

MANSFIELD v DONCASTER

MANSFIELD welcome back Richie Barker after he was rested in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy defeat at Darlington. Stephen Dawson (back) and John Mullins (calf) are both doubtful. DONCASTER will be without Sean McDaid (knee) for three months. Steve Roberts (head) remains sidelined, but James O'Connor (heel) is expected to be return.

RUSHDEN v TAMWORTH

RUSHDEN could be without Nicky Eyre, Andrew Rigby and Jon Ashton. Eyre and Rigby both came down with stomach bugs in midweek, while Ashton has a knee injury. Peterborough have also refused Chris Plummer permission to play. TAMWORTH defender Alan Neilson is doubtful (calf), but Matt Williams (groin) should feature. Dave Bampton (knee) and Michael Touhy (ankle) are both out.

LEAGUE ONE

ROTHERHAM v YEOVIL

MILLERS midfielder Lee Williamson remains sidelined with a broken toe, but Michael Keane has recovered from a hamstring strain which has kept him out of the past two games. YEOVIL defender Scott Guyett returns to the squad after a three-match ban. Glovers boss Russell Slade has a major doubt over utility-man Paul Terry, who turned an ankle in training this week.

LEAGUE TWO

ACCRINGTON v SHREWSBURY

STANLEY are without suspended pair Shaun Whalley, who starts a three-match ban, and Jay Harris. On-loan midfielder David Mannix has returned to Liverpool. SHREWSBURY will be without the suspended Sagi Burton. Midfielder Ben Davies is also banned for one game, but Scott Shearer will return in goal after being rested in midweek.

SWINDON v MORECAMBE

SWINDON youngster Michael Pook returns after missing last week's League win over Bury through suspension. MORECAMBE striker Wayne Curtis has suffered a knee problem in training and is a doubt, but Gary Hunter and Danny Carlton are available.

hero relives joy of '76



TO BUILD ON GLORY DAYS

and Manchester United. We've come a long way as a club in the last few years and we want to go a lot further.

"The money this creates will give us a chance to strengthen the side when January comes but it's about much more than that. The people from around here are suddenly being reminded that they've got a football club again and there's a lovely buzz around the place."

● **BASINGSTOKE** striker Matt Warner will seek inspiration from Roy Esandoh to fire the part-timers into the third round for the first time at Aldershot today.

Winner

He was a trainee at Wycombe when Essandoh hit the winner at Leicester in their run to the semi-finals.

Warner, whose goal put out Chesterfield, said: "Everyone recalls Roy's goal as one of the fairytale of the cup."

"Wycombe paid for us to go to all the games. It was a great experience. I'd love to be part of something similar at Basingstoke."

● **TV:** Tomorrow BBC1 — Salisbury v Forest, 1pm

Hall over as Lynn hearts are broken

OLDHAM edged past brave Southern League Premier minnows King's Lynn last night to book a third-round FA Cup spot.

John Sheridan's high-flying League One side had too much class for the part-timers ranked 91 places below them in the football pecking order.

Chris Porter nodded home his 12th goal of the campaign inside the opening 10 minutes after a bright start from the smallest club left in this season's competition.

And Chris Hall broke Lynn's hearts with a decisive second on 82 minutes.

Sharp

Liverpool target Neal Eardley needed to take evasive action to clear Lynn striker Jack Defty's sharp header before Porter forced Charlie Defty to hack clear.

The lanky striker made amends seconds later with a point-blank header after Linnets' keeper Shaun Marshall failed to deal with Andy Liddell's teasing cross.

Oldham went for the jugular against the plucky non-league outfit. Chris Taylor curled a right-footer just over before Lynn captain Mark

■ King's Lynn 0 Oldham 2

Warren flung himself at Gary McDonald's pile driver.

Richie Wellens dragged wide from inside the six-yard box but Lynn weathered the storm to push the visitors onto the back foot in the closing stages of the half.

Defty headed over after out-muscling Will Haining then strike partner Michael Frew galloped clear only to scuff a right-footer beyond Les Pogliacomi's far post.

The giant Australian acrobatically denied Defty when he went full length to parry the big target man's goal-bound flick.

Lynn's tricky winger Matt O'Halloran was inches from drawing the hosts level against his former club when he planted a header over. Marshall clutched McDonald's sharp strike at the second attempt as Oldham upped the pace on the restart.

Lynn's stopper produced a superb double stop to deny McDonald and Paul Warne from point-blank range.

Hall sealed the win with a close-range header from Liddell's cross from the right.

TABLES

Barclays Premiership

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	15	12	2	1	33	7	38
Chelsea	15	11	1	2	26	35	35
Portsmouth	15	7	3	5	19	12	24
Bolton	15	7	3	5	15	14	24
Aston Villa	15	5	8	2	17	13	23
Arsenal	14	6	4	4	22	12	22
Liverpool	15	6	4	5	15	15	22
Reading	14	7	1	6	16	18	22
Everton	15	5	6	4	18	15	21
Fulham	15	5	5	5	10	21	20
Tottenham	14	5	4	5	13	16	19
Man City	15	5	4	6	13	17	19
Wigan	13	5	3	5	17	16	18
Middlesbrough	14	4	4	6	11	17	16
West Ham	14	2	8	2	30	14	14
Blackburn	13	3	4	6	11	17	13
Newcastle	14	3	4	7	9	15	13
Sheff Wed	15	3	4	8	9	13	13
Wolves	14	1	6	7	10	20	9
Charlton	14	2	3	9	10	21	9

Coca-Cola Championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Preston	20	10	8	2	31	17	38
Cardiff	20	11	4	5	31	20	37
Birmingham	20	11	4	5	29	21	37
Derby	20	10	4	6	34	37	34
Burnley	20	10	4	6	29	21	34
Stoke	20	9	6	5	29	15	33
Southampton	20	9	6	5	32	33	33
Colchester	20	9	8	3	33	25	30
Plymouth	20	9	9	2	27	20	30
West Brom	20	8	5	7	32	23	29
Coventry	20	9	2	9	20	18	29
Norwich	20	5	7	8	28	32	26
Wolves	20	8	5	7	18	23	29
Sunderland	20	8	5	7	27	27	27
Sheff Wed	20	7	6	7	26	27	27
Ipswich	20	7	3	10	30	30	24
QPR	20	5	9	10	21	30	24
Crystal Palace	20	6	5	9	22	26	23
Leicester	20	5	7	8	19	24	22
Julian	20	6	4	10	26	32	22
Barnsley	20	6	3	11	25	36	21
Leds	20	6	3	11	23	39	19
Hull	20	4	5	11	16	29	17
Southend	20	2	6	12	16	37	12

Coca-Cola League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
North Forest	19	12	5	2	26	12	41
Scunthorpe	19	10	5	4	23	14	35
Tranmere	19	10	4	5	23	13	34
Bristol City	19	10	3	6	25	18	33
Oldham	19	9	5	5	16	16	32
Swansea	19	9	4	6	26	20	31
Yeovil	19	7	7	5	16	31	28
Carlisle	19	8	6	5	23	20	30
Crew	19	8	3	8	33	27	27
Gillingham	19	8	3	8	32	27	27
Blackpool	19	7	6	6	26	21	25
Doncaster	19	7	6	6	26	21	25
Brighton	19	7	3	9	24	24	24
Huddersfield	19	6	7	6	25	30	24
Bradford	19	6	7	6	25	30	24
Cheshfield	19	6	5	8	26	27	23
Port Vale	19	6	5	8	26	27	23
Northampton	19	5	7	7	15	18	22
Rotherham	19	4	7	8	29	24	18
Shrewsbury	19	4	6	9	16	18	18
Bournemouth	19	3	8	8	17	26	17
Millwall	19	4	5	10	18	31	17
Brentford	19	3	8	8	16	17	17
Leyton Orient	19	3	6	10	20	34	15

Coca-Cola League Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Walsall	19	13	5	1	32	9	44
Swindon	19	11	4	4	26	15	37
Lincoln City	19	11	2	6	39	24	35
Wye	19	10	4	5	34	34	34
Peterborough	19	10	4	5	32	26	34
Mk Dons	19	10	3	6	26	13	33
Northampton	19	9	4	6	26	21	31
Darlington	19	8	6	5	26	22	30
Shrewsbury	19	8	6	5	26	22	30
Hereford	19	8	3	8	23	27	27
Hartlepool	19	7	5	7	24	22	26
Stockport	19	7	5	7	24	22	26
Bury	19	8	2	9	24	25	26
Shrewsbury	19	7	5	7	24	22	26
Wrexham	19	6	4	9	19	28	22
Chesham	19	5	6	8	17	20	21
Manfield	19	5	6	8	30	21	21
Barnet	19	5	6	8	26	34	21
Accrington St	19	5	6	8	27	30	20
Rochdale	19	5	5	9	21	26	20
Grimsby	19	5	5	9	20	32	20
Torquay	19	4	6	9	16	18	18
Boston Utd	19	4	5	10	24	37	17
Macclesfield	19	4	5	10	24	37	17

Nationwide Conference

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oxford Utd	20	14	5	1	37	11	47
Day & Night	20	13	1	6	47	16	45
Gravesend	21	10	5	6	29	24	35
Burton Albion	20	10	5	5	19	14	34
Weymouth	20	10	4	6	23	22	34
York	20	10	4	6	27	27	34
Morecambe	20	9	6	5	25	22	33
Exeter	20	7	9	4	28	20	30
Aldershot	20	8	7	5	36	29	29
Woking	20	8	4	8	29	24	28
Grays Athletic	20	7	6	7	33	21	27
Stafford	20	7	6	7	29	27	27
Stevenage	20	7	4	9	33	34	25
Northwich	20	8	1	11	26	35	25
Cambridge Utd	21	5	10	2	29	23	25
Halifax	20	6	4	10	24	29	22
Peter Green	21	4	10	6	31	32	22
Altrincham	20	5	7	8	20	29	22
Kidderminster	20	5	6	9	18	26	21
St Albans	21	5	11	5	31	42	20
Tenbury	20	5	5	10	23	35	20
Crawley Town	20	9	9	2	36	18	19
Rushden & D	20	4	5	11	22	29	17
Southport	20	3	7	10	20	31	16

Scottish Premier League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	16	13	2	1	33	12	41
Rangers	16	8	4	4	26	16	28
Aberdeen	16	8	4	4	22	13	28
Hibernian	16	8	5	3	16	13	28
Hearts	16	6	5	5	21	16	23
Kilmarnock	16	6	4	6	19	26	22
Inverness CT	16	4	8	4	16	19	20
Falkirk	16	5	3	8	20	23	18
Dundee Utd	16	5	7	15	28	17	17
St Mirren	16	4	4	8	14	21	16
Motherwell	16	4	3	9	20	15	15
Dundee	16	3	3	10	11	26	12

Scottish First Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gretna	15	9	3	3	41	20	30
Partick	15	8	3	4	24	27	27
Hamilton	15	7	5	3	18	19	26
St Johnstone	15	6	3	6	14	24	24
Livingston	15	4	6	5	20	14	18
Queen's Park	15	4	6	5	21	17	18
Dundee	15	6	2	7	18	17	21
Ross County	15	4	4	7	13	16	16
Queen of South	15	3	2	10	10	30	11
Airdrie Utd	15	3	2	10	10	30	11

Scottish Second Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morton	15	11	2	2	34	11	35
Stirling	14	8	5	1	28	14	29
Brechin	15	7	3	5	22	17	24
Ayr	15	5	3	7	15	15	18
Alloa	15	5	4	6	16	28	19
Cowdenbeath	15	5	3	7	28	22	18
Stranraer	15	3	3	9	12	32	18
Peterhead	15	2	8	27	26	17	14
Rathfriland	15	3	6	14	19	15	15
Forfar	14	1	10	12	37	8	6

Scottish Third Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
East Fife	15	8	3	4	27	13	27
Queens Park	15	8	3	4	22	14	27
Dumfries	15	8	2	5	11	16	26
Stenhousemuir	15	8	2	5	21	18	26
Arbroath	15	8	1	6	25	17	25
Berwick	14	7	5	17	15	23	23
Albion	15	3	7	23	25	13	13
Montrose	15	7	1	7	13	23	23
East Stirling	14	4	1	9	13	29	13
Elgin	16	2	1	13	17	32	7

Toddy rues Brad luck

COLIN TODD was left wondering when his luck would change as Bradford failed to deliver an FA Cup knockout to Millwall at Valley Parade.

The Bantams struck the woodwork twice and missed several other chances to book their place in the third round as Willie Donachie's men held on for a replay.

Todd's side have won just once in the last nine matches and have not triumphed in two successive rounds of the cup for a decade.

Both sides had early chances to take the lead. Steve Schumacher was sent through after just two minutes but was

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BARCLAYS PREMIERSHIP

TEAMTALK

Arsenal v Tottenham (12.45)

ARSENAL skipper Thierry Henry is out with a neck problem. Philippe Senderos is suspended following his sending-off in the midweek defeat to Fulham, so Johan Djourou is likely to come in. LEDLEY KING is expected to be fit for Spurs despite a suspected virus. Jermaine Jenas is back in contention after recovering from a calf injury but Anthony Gardner (knee), Mido (groin) and Paul Stalteri (knee) are out. Last season: Arsenal 1 Tottenham 1. Referee: G Poll.

Blackburn v Fulham

BLACKBURN defender Lucas Neill is back after a hamstring strain. Tugay is suspended following his sending-off against Spurs, while Zurab Khizanishvili and Francis Jeffers (both groin) are doubts. FULHAM'S Ian Pearce is set to return after serving a one-match ban in the midweek. Tomasz Radzinski faces a late check after crashing head first into the advertising hoardings as he scored against Arsenal. Last season: Blackburn 2 Fulham 1. Referee: S Bennett.

Middlesbrough v Man Utd (5.15)

INJURY-PRONE Boro striker Malcolm Christie is battling to overcome a groin strain picked up in training. Mark Viduka, recovering from a broken toe, has an outside chance of making the substitutes' bench. UNITED defender Rio Ferdinand has recovered from the minor ankle knock he picked up on Wednesday. Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Louis Saha and Nemanja Vidic are all expected to return. Last season: Middlesbrough 4 Man Utd 1. Referee: C Foy.

Portsmouth v Aston Villa

PORTSMOUTH have Pedro Mendes back from a knee injury and he will compete with Manuel Fernandes, Niko Kranjcar and David Thompson for a place in midfield. Sean Davis (groin) is out. VILLA boss Martin O'Neill has no fresh injury worries, with Stuart Taylor deputising again in goal for Thomas Sorensen (knee). Juan Pablo Angel and Milan Baros are again likely to start up front. Last season: Portsmouth 1 Aston Villa 1. Referee: M Riley.

Reading v Bolton

READING winger Glen Little faces a late fitness test on a hamstring problem. Winger Bobby Conway will be out for another three weeks following a clean-up operation on a knee injury. BOLTON are set to name an unchanged side after the defeat by Chelsea. Quinton Fortune (Achilles) is likely to stay sidelined but Ricardo Gardner (knee) could return to the squad for the first time in seven months. Last season: No corresponding fixture. Referee: A Wiley.

Sheffield Utd v Charlton

SHEFFIELD UNITED are without centre-back Claude Davis who suffered a knee injury against Watford. Neil Warnock will make late decisions on Derek Geary, Mikele Leigertwood and Chris Morgan, who all picked up knocks at Vicarage Road. CHARLTON are again without Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (thigh). Jerome Thomas (knee) is also out, but defender Souleymane Diawara (hamstring) returns to the squad. Last season: No corresponding fixture. Referee: P Dowd.

Wigan v Liverpool

WIGAN striker Emile Heskey is poised to start against former club Liverpool. Heskey returned from a two-game lay-off with a calf injury by playing the final 60 minutes of last Sunday's 3-1 defeat at Spurs. KOP boss Rafa Benitez will have Craig Bellamy back and hopes Xabi Alonso also makes it. Bellamy was missing against Portsmouth due to his court case while Alonso was missing due to a hamstring problem. Last season: Wigan 0 Liverpool 1. Referee: H Webb.

TOMORROW

Everton v West Ham (4)

EVERTON will have on-loan goalkeeper Tim Howard back after being ineligible to play against Manchester United. Andy Johnson, who has missed the last two matches due to a hamstring problem, is still doubtful. WEST HAM will make a late check on John Pantsil (head) and Yossi Benayoun (knee). Centre-back Danny Gabbidon remains sidelined with a hamstring injury. Last season: Everton 1 West Ham 2. Referee: M Atkinson.

'We're behind Benni'

by NEIL JOHNSTON

AARON MOKOENA has backed Benni McCarthy to end his goal drought and fire Blackburn away from relegation trouble.

McCarthy is without a goal in his last five top-flight games and his slump has coincided with Rovers flirting with the bottom three.

Mark Hughes' outfit face Fulham at Ewood Park having scored just once in four games.

But Mokoena believes McCarthy will prove he is still one of Europe's most lethal strikers.

Toughest

Mokoena, who has just agreed a new three-year deal, said: "People expect Benni to score goals like he did at Porto and Celta Vigo."

"But the Premiership is the toughest league in the world and he needs time to adjust."

"He's an experienced striker. I have great belief in Benni and I'm sure the gaffer does too."

"It helps that Mark Hughes was a striker and he knows what to say to Benni."

"It's not just Benni. All the strikers know that when you don't score goals it's always going to be difficult."

"It's something you have to put right."

SERIOUSLY football

Fulham star wants Neville's shirt



I'M GOING PLACES:
Rosenior on Under-21 duty

LIAM ROSENIOR is eager to catch Steve McClaren's eye in order to play a part in England's future.

Fulham's 22-year-old right back has been Chris Coleman's star man this season and wants to stake a claim for an international call.

Rosenior was gutted not to make the recent squad against Holland, when the England boss gave Manchester City's Micah Richards his debut.

Now he's on a mission to prove he can be Gary Neville's long-term successor.

The former Under-21 star said: "I looked at the last England call-up and was a little bit disappointed that I wasn't mentioned. But that is up to the powers that be."

"Gary Neville could probably play for the next four years if you see his quality

by DEAN JONES

and fitness levels. He is getting up that right wing now more than ever, and I think he is better than he ever has been."

"It might take a bit longer for someone like me to get in at right back but I'm only 22 and I want to be challenging for the England spot for the next 10 years."

"Micah Richards is the same and it would be great to be mentioned in the next World Cup."

Dream

"To represent my country has always been my dream and my ambition. I would play in goal for England — I'm not fussed!"

"I admire Gary Neville. He has been outstanding since Euro '96."

"I think I've got more of Ashley Cole's attributes in terms of the way he attacks but I take a bit from everyone's games and hopefully one day people will talk about me in that same breath."

Rosenior faces Blackburn today

as Fulham aim to continue the form which saw them stun Arsenal with a 2-1 win in midweek.

And the son of former West Ham star Leroy Rosenior has revealed a passion for collecting shirts, which helps inspire him to become one of the country's top players.

Rosenior added: "I managed to get Theo Walcott's shirt after the game. I think he will be a fantastic player. Hopefully we will be in England squads together in the future."

"I frame shirts. I don't put them up in my house but it's nice to see them there in the attic. I've got Cristiano Ronaldo, Wayne Rooney, even Raul from pre-season. I'm a good shirt collector and I will keep doing it for the rest of my career."

"Even now I go in there and walk around and think: 'Oh yeah. I played against Raul!' It's a nice feeling and makes you feel good about yourself."

"It's great what I've achieved but I want to achieve more and push on in my career."



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**SERIOUSLY
football****Al tells Hammers stars to impress new boss****Moyes sets Jole a goal**

DAVID MOYES is urging Joleon Lescott to go forward and help Everton overcome their goal shortage.

Lescott has impressed since his £5m summer move from Wolves to Merseyside, mainly in his recognised position in the centre of defence but also as an emergency left-back.

With main goal grabber Andy Johnson doubtful and Tim Cahill, another prolific marksman, out for the rest of the year, Moyes wants to see Lescott join the scoring charts.

He'd love a first goal to boost a side who started the campaign so well but have tailed-off with only two goals in their last six outings.

Lescott managed 13 in 212 League games for

■ by CHRIS HARPER

Wolves but has still to get off the mark with Everton.

"The challenges that Joleon has faced - and he has come up against most of the top forwards - he has handled," said Moyes.

"He's not been done for pace or strength and is strong in the air. He just needs to add a goal to his game."

Close

"I've told him this. He missed one at Arsenal and came close at Tottenham."

"You look at John Terry as a centre-half who can score a goal from set-pieces and that's invaluable."

"He's got to first and foremost get his feet

under the table here at Everton and pick up consistency.

"At centre-half you can't make many mistakes and you must be at the same level every game."

"Defenders can't be up and down in games like a forward. They have to be reliable and he is showing that."

"There are a few things he needs to work on but he has shown some very good signs."

"I think he would be close to the England squad but they are strong at centre-back."

"But Wednesday night at Old Trafford showed he isn't that far behind Rio Ferdinand and in his favour he is left-footed and there aren't many of those available to England."



STAYING POWER: Carlos Tevez (with Marlon Harewood) will remain a Hammer after apologising to Pardew (inset)

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ALAN PARDEW warned his Jekyll and Hyde Hammers stars: Dazzle our new chairman or face a January departure.

West Ham boss Pardew is believed to have a mega £20m transfer window kitty after new chairman Eggert Magnusson's £85m takeover.

And the Upton Park manager has put the heat on his players by telling them they face being replaced if they turn into Christmas turkeys again.

Flop

Last December was a festive flop for the Hammers, with just four points from 21 and Pardew - whose side are one point off the drop zone - says failing again would have serious repercussions.

He is already chasing Chelsea's Shaun Wright-Phillips and the Hammers boss, whose side face

■ by ALISTAIR GRANT

Everton away tomorrow, said: "There are issues with a takeover, whether negative or positive."

"If I was a player here, I'd certainly want to show my best side now."

"The new man will obviously have an opinion as we go through the next set of games."

"What happens between now and Christmas will tell me a lot about the team."

"I don't have a figure to spend in January but I have a vision of where to look if we need to. The right side of the pitch certainly needs to be addressed."

"We're making preparations if we need to and the players here need to establish themselves. "Some have and some need to progress further to nail down their positions."

Pardew has also warned his players to forget festive fun this month - because he was fuming

when they tumbled down the table 12 months ago.

"The finishing line seems a long way away and teams are now focusing on the Carling Cup, FA Cup, European ties, Christmas and shopping," Pardew said.

"You can lose your focus. Maybe those things affected us last year. This time last year was our worst period and that's even more reason to focus this year."

Stay

"We're professional footballers and staff and we need to win games."

Pardew insisted Carlos Tevez and Javier Mascherano are set to stay until the summer after talks with Kia Joorabchian, who owns the duo's registration.

Tevez has apologised after storming out of the ground after being subbed against Sheffield United and Pardew said: "It was a constructive meeting and both players are likely to stay."

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STAN NOON is a 45 year old painter and decorator from Gravesend in Kent and in February of this year he entered our free 888.com tournament in the Daily Star. We asked him why he entered,

"My absolute goal was to make the top 10 and win one of the fabulous customised 888 chip sets! That's the honest truth! In fact I won the First Prize, a week at the Bellagio in Las Vegas, flights, accommodation and a free buy-in to the world famous Bellagio tournament. I was gobsmacked!" So, how did the tournament pan out?

"I played it cautiously early on just to make sure I stayed in. As I approached the final it

was looking like I was finished 'cos my stack had dwindled down drastically. Long story short, I got the chance to go all-in, took it and I won it!" How did the family react?

"The wife and I went nuts, it was a great feeling. Very emotional." Any tips for other Star readers thinking of entering today's new Caribbean Adventure tournament?

"Yes. Don't worry about not being an expert. Just register and get yourself stuck in. Play the cards."



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Albert's relief at a Luque escape

by IAN MURTAGH

ALBERT LUQUE reflected on the most turbulent week of his ill-fated Newcastle career and declared: "I'm lucky to be alive."

The Spaniard was involved in an accident on Wednesday morning when his Porsche was written off by a juggernaut – and it all happened because he had forgotten his passport.

Luque had arrived at Newcastle Airport in time to catch the flight to Germany for the Toon's UEFA Cup tie against Eintracht Frankfurt but realised he'd left home without his documents.

Scary

As he was driving away from the airport, he suffered a puncture and his decision to get out of his car before phoning for help saved his life.

He declared: "My name is very apt because I feel lucky to be alive. If I had still been sitting in my car, I would not be here today."

Recalling the horror moment when the truck collided with his vehicle, he added: "It was scary."

"I was standing behind my car, talking on the phone and just had enough time to jump into



LUQUE: Shaken

a ditch. It was a frightening experience but could have been much worse." Luque's misfortune did not end there. After being breathalysed and interviewed by police, he was driven to Manchester to catch another flight only to miss that one as well.

And he didn't link up with the Newcastle squad until after 11pm on Wednesday. He played in the goalless draw in Frankfurt but was subbed after an ineffective display.

True

Though he was not physically injured and told boss Glenn Roeder he was fit to play, Luque now accepts he was asking too much of himself.

"After everything that happened, maybe it was not the best day for me to be playing," he said.

Luque will almost certainly leave Newcastle in the new year with both Villarreal and Real Betis interested.

"In Spain, everyone is saying I am not happy here but that is not true. It is just that I need to play," he added.

"But the Newcastle chairman Freddy Shepherd has told me that if an offer is made and it is acceptable to the club, he will let me decide."

SERIOUSLY
football

Electric Davies provides Reebok spark

KEV'S A POWER HOUSE

Bolton striker's energy can run a home for 10 days



JUMP START
Davies rising high against Everton

KEVIN DAVIES is keen to keep powering Bolton's European push after boffins worked out he runs enough in a season to power a house for TEN days.

Experts at Sheffield's Hallam University calculated Davies expends 6,700 kilojoules-worth of energy in one 90-minute match.

And their research proves his work-rate over a 52-match season creates enough power to run a house for a week and a half.

Manager Sam Allardyce has frequently talked up Davies' work-rate and has

by GEORGE SCOTT

Bolton boss is right to hail his hitman because in one match he generates enough energy to run a standard TV for six hours.

The research – by Dr David James for energy company E.ON UK – underlines Davies' credentials as the hardest working striker in the Premiership.

Now Davies wants to run Reading into the ground today and jump Bolton back into third place in the Premiership.

He said: "Reading are doing well in the league, especially at home. They have surprised a few people this season. I have

seen them a few times and they play some good football. I think they are justified in their position in the league."

Davies has urged his team-mates not to underestimate Steve Coppell's side as they attempt to bounce back from Wednesday's narrow defeat by Chelsea.

Best

He added: "Hopefully we won't go down there thinking 'It's only Reading'. We have to go and play like we have in the last two games to get something."

"We've had a decent performance against one of the best teams in Europe so we have to take that and use it."

Bolton skipper Kevin Nolan will wear a

protective splint today after dislocating his finger in the defeat by Chelsea.

Nolan said: "It's painful and I'll need it in a splint. It isn't broken but it is dislocated and the bone popped out through the skin."

Despite the Chelsea loss, Nolan is convinced Bolton can end Reading's current good run of form.

He added: "It's going to be tough because Reading are coming off the back of three wins but we'll be well prepared and we'll be up for the fight."

"We are satisfied with the position we are in but not with the points we've got."

"This team doesn't expect to be beaten four times in six games."

Don't go missing, Sid

READING skipper Graeme Murty is begging star midfielder Steve Sidwell to follow his lead by pledging his future to the Royals.

Murty, 32, is the veteran of the Madejski Stadium after eight years with the club and yesterday signed a new contract until 2009.

Chase

Now he is hoping Sidwell will snub offers from other clubs in order to achieve his ambitions with Reading.

Sidwell's contract runs out next summer and Manchester City will lead the chase to snap him up in the January transfer window. Murty said:

by DEAN JONES

"They are trying to pull up trees to get him to stay here and we're hopeful he will."

"It is apparent when he steps on the pitch that he runs through walls for us and he has been exceptional in showing that he has matured into a Premiership midfielder player."

"Teams are looking at him, and rightly so, but they are looking at other players as well and I think they are starting to realise that Sids is part of a well-oiled machine here."

"We hope he thinks he can achieve his aims here."

"We could finish above some

big teams and then how do you marry that with your career prospects?"

"It's a very difficult thing for him and he has a massive decision to make. None of the lads will begrudge him a move if he gets one."

Boost

"We would be the first to shake his hand and wish him the best – and then kick him when he came back!"

"But if we can influence him by our performances and where we finish in the league, then it's all to do."

Sidwell's signature would boost manager Steve Coppell, who is not expecting to make

too many buys next month. He said: "The chairman never gives me a budget but I know our market and the type of player we are in for."

"We have a small field in which to manoeuvre."

"Very rarely does signing players in January do anything for you, though – with the exception of Harry Redknapp last year."

As his side prepare to face Bolton today, Coppell admits he is a big fan of their direct approach.

He added: "I say do whatever it takes and it is admirable for a relatively small club to be competing at the very top end of this league."



SIDWELL: Difficult decision

Reed's going to War

by PAUL BROWN

CHARLTON boss Les Reed has revealed a rivalry with Sheffield United manager Neil Warnock stretching back 20 years.

Reed was player-coach at Wealdstone when he first came face to face with the Yorkshireman in 1986.

But it's not a happy memory for Warnock, who was cutting his teeth as a manager at Scarborough and lost the game 4-0.

With both men now in charge of teams battling to avoid relegation from the Premiership, Reed would be delighted with a similar result today.

Pretty

He said: "I've known Neil since our non-league days.

"There's one game that I remember, it may have been Neil's first in charge of Scarborough. I think we won 4-0.

"He was much as he is now - very ambitious. He's done a fantastic job to get Sheffield United into the Premiership.

"We have different traits. We will try to play with the ball on the ground all the time.

"But we won't just play pretty football and get beat. We are going to compete."

SERIOUSLY football

Captain Chris says Blades are safe bet

MORGAN'S A TOP DOG

BOSS Neil Warnock treated his Sheffield United players to a night at the greyhound racing this week.

But club captain Chris Morgan insists the Blades' survival hopes won't be following them to the dogs.

Warnock has allowed his players a few days' rest and relaxation in the wake of their hard-fought win at Watford on Tuesday.

His players indulged in some gambling at Walthamstow dog track before enjoying an afternoon of pampering at a Sheffield health spa.

Morgan revealed some of his team-mates took the bookies to the cleaners on their night of team-bonding in London.

Now the no-nonsense defender is convinced the Blades can beat the odds again and survive this

by JEREMY CROSS

season. They host fellow strugglers Charlton at Bramall Lane today looking to build on their success at Vicarage Road and Morgan said: "It has been a nice, relaxing change this week.

"The gaffer just wanted a change of scenery. "We went to the dogs and some of the lads upset the bookies.

Spirit

"It has been good because it has helped the lads bond a bit more and improved the camaraderie in the camp, which is so vital.

"I think we've done well so far this season.

"We would like to have some more points on the board but who wouldn't?"

"But there is a great spirit in the dressing room and we all believe we can achieve our ambition of staying up."

Morgan admits it is easy for promoted teams to be in awe of the top flight but feels the Blades have finally overcome their inferiority complex.

He added: "I don't think we are a million miles away. "People talk about these Premiership superstars but they have only got two arms and legs like everyone else.

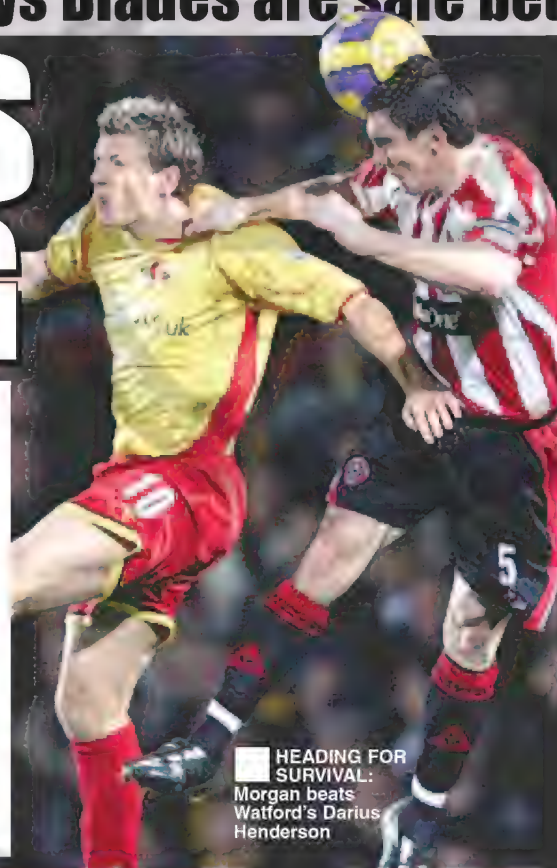
"You can't just stand there gawping around at them.

"You've got to go out and compete and believe in your own ability.

"If you stick together and believe in yourselves then it doesn't matter what other people think.

"We've proved that in a few games so far this season and we must continue doing so.

"This is a tough place to play football but it's where everybody wants to be and that is what we must keep telling ourselves."



HEADING FOR SURVIVAL: Morgan beats Watford's Darius Henderson

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**SERIOUSLY
football****Redknapp's the real deal says Pompey ace**

LINVOY'S WILD ABOUT HARRY

HARRY REDKNAPP is about to complete a year back in charge of Portsmouth that even by his remarkable standards borders on the miraculous.

Redknapp made his much-publicised and highly controversial return on December 7 last year, when Portsmouth were in desperate trouble at the foot of the Premiership and he knew he was on a hiding to nothing.

Pilloried by the Pompey faithful for quitting in the first place, few ever wanted to see him near Fratton Park again.

Yet, amazingly, Pompey go into today's Premiership game at home to Aston Villa third in the table, with only Manchester United and Chelsea above them. After winning back the fans' respect, Redknapp was dubbed 'Harry Houdini' last May when he saved Pompey from relegation.

His encore is beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

Over the years the incredible wheeler-dealer has taken gambles on players seemingly past their best and has somehow given them a new lease of life.

The list includes Paul Merson, Steve Stone, Teddy Sheringham, and now David James, Sol Campbell and Kanu.

Knack

Central defender Linvoy Primus is one of many to flourish under Redknapp.

And Primus has exclusively revealed what he believes is the simple but effective secret behind the Pompey manager's uncanny knack of getting the best out of free signings and cheap buys that few others would bother to touch.

Primus said: "The thing about the gaffer is that he trusts everybody he brings in and makes them want to play for him."

"He gives you that feeling of being wanted. He treats each person individually and he doesn't mind if you happen to miss a couple of training sessions as long as you are ready for the game."

"That is what makes him different. If he gives a player a bit of help, like time off, he knows the response will be good. He treats players like adults and doesn't restrict them or box us in."

"He gives us freedom as long as no one oversteps the mark."

"That is how people want to be treated and because he gives you that trust, you are happy to go along with what he asks."

"And there are no prima donnas because he doesn't allow for that."

Magic

One of Redknapp's first comments on his return was to declare he did not have a magic wand.

Instead he recruited the likes of keeper Dean Kiely, out of favour at Charlton, plus Sean Davis, Pedro Mendes and Noe Pamart, virtual outcasts at Tottenham.

With a late run that brought 20 points from a possible 30, Pompey stayed up.

This summer, when it was revealed successful businessman Sacha Gaydamak had taken over control of Pompey from Milan Mandaric, there

**EXCLUSIVE by
PETER WHITE**

was talk that Redknapp would be given up to £20m for team re-building.

Instead, he spent just £1m recruiting 36-year-old former England keeper James from Manchester City.

He snapped up ex-Arsenal pair Campbell and Kanu for nothing along with midfielder David Thompson, who also didn't cost a penny.

Again it seemed their best days were behind them but Redknapp had other ideas.

Primus added: "I definitely believe Harry coming back was the best thing that could have happened to the club."

Point

"He knew how the club worked and I think he was the only one who could have come into that situation and turned it round like he did."

"Harry also had a point to prove to the supporters."

"He wanted to prove he may have made a mistake in the past but this was a way of making it up to them - keeping us in the Premiership and then pushing us forward."

Barry's s-Mart move

GARETH BARRY today lines up against the man who tried to snatch him away with Aston Villa boss Martin O'Neill admitting: Thank God he didn't go.

O'Neill believes Villa could have been in big trouble if the midfielder had made a £5m switch to Portsmouth.

Barry has become Villa's very own Captain Fantastic with O'Neill declaring: "He's a very talented player and he's the sort of guy who just wants to do everything."

"He wants to take the corners and then get in the box to head them in. He just loves playing football."

"He's playing at the top of



HAPPY HARRY: Redknapp has worked wonders

by DAVE ARMITAGE

his form and he's just been absolutely terrific for us.

"I think he was quite close to leaving and I can only say that I'm absolutely delighted he didn't."

"We would have been in a lot of trouble if he had gone. "I certainly wouldn't have been able to come up with a replacement of his quality."

"He has a massive appetite for the game. I don't think money comes into it for him."

"He just wants to play and that's the common denominator between really good players - they love it."

"I know I'm going back a

hundred years but I once played in a European Cup final and we genuinely didn't know what the win bonus was. It wasn't about that."

Villa look to bounce back from their desperately disappointing midweek defeat against Manchester City with O'Neill revealing that he hadn't read the riot act to his players.

Right

He added: "The whole team was pretty poor but overall I've been delighted with what they have given me."

"I know the fans were disappointed and one or two of them showed that, but

they are entitled to. They fork out hard-earned money to watch and want to see their team perform."

"When that doesn't happen they have a right to express their disappointment."

"It's up to us to try and bounce back against a Portsmouth side which has done superbly following their incredible escape last season."

"Harry Redknapp has done a marvellous job there."

Villa will be without keeper Thomas Sorensen. The Dane's knee injury is worse than first feared and he is expected to be out for three weeks.

Knifed Ronnie facing loan KO

by JEREMY CROSS

FORMER Manchester United player Ronnie Wallwork is facing the boot from Barnsley after a fight which left him in hospital with stab wounds.

The midfielder, who is on loan at the Tykes from West Brom, was stabbed several times in his hand, stomach and back in an attack in a Manchester city centre bar.

Police, who were called to the Sugar Lounge bar just before midnight on Thursday, do not believe the attack was random.

Wallwork, 29, who was with his partner and several friends, is in a stable condition.

Tykes chairman Gordon Shepherd had been hoping to extend Wallwork's deal until the end of the season.

Clash

But that is now in jeopardy after Wallwork decided to go out after being given time off because he was suspended for today's derby clash at Leeds.

A Barnsley source said: "Officials are less than impressed because he has only managed two games before getting suspended and then this happens."

Wallwork picked up his fifth booking of the season in Barnsley's 2-0 win over Southend on Tuesday.

A statement from West Brom read: "We are shocked and dismayed."

"We are now making our own enquiries and are awaiting further details."

It is not the first time Wallwork's career has been clouded in controversy.

During a loan spell with Royal Antwerp, he was banned from football for life after he allegedly attacked a referee.

It was reduced on appeal to just a one-year sanction which related only to Belgium.

Barnett ban cut

AGENT Jonathan Barnett has lost his appeal against a ban and fine imposed for his part in the Ashley Cole tapping-up affair.

However Barnett, who is Cole's agent, has had his ban reduced from 18 months to 12 months.

It means he will be unable to operate as a players' agent for the transfer window in January.

But as eight months of the ban are suspended, he will be able to operate again from February 15 next year.

An FA appeal board hearing upheld the £100,000 fine imposed on him by a disciplinary commission on September 26.

England full-back Cole and Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho have already been punished for their role in the meeting.

**SERIOUSLY
football****Emile backs his old team-mate to silence the boo-boys**

HESK: MY PENN PAL CAN BE KOP IDOL

EMILE HESKEY has backed pal **Jermaine Pennant** to silence the Liverpool boo-boys and emerge as a Kop idol.

Pennant was targeted by fans as Rafa Benitez's faint title hopes vanished in Wednesday's tedious goalless draw with Portsmouth.

Heskey knows what it is like to get on the wrong side of Liverpool fans after being singled out for criticism during his four years at Anfield.

Seek

And Wigan's former England striker is confident his troubled ex-Birmingham team-mate will emerge smiling from this latest chapter in a life which has seen Pennant jailed and forced to play with an electronic tag.

Heskey comes face to face with Pennant as Liverpool seek their first top-flight away win of the

■ by NEIL JOHNSTON

campaign at Wigan. The Latics marksman, 28, said: "Jermaine can definitely come through this. He's only 23 but he's already come through a lot in his life.

"People need to realise that it's going to take him a while to adjust but I'm sure the fans will see the best of Jermaine soon."

"If Jermaine needs any help, I'll give him a call. He's got my number as well and I'll be happy to give him any advice."

Heskey was part of the Liverpool team which won the FA Cup, UEFA Cup and League Cup in the 2000-01 season.

And he admits he is shocked to see his former club struggling in the Premiership.

Benitez's troops start at the JJB Stadium 16 points behind leaders Manchester United after one win in four games.

Heskey added: "I am surprised

at the position Liverpool find themselves in – particularly with the players they have got.

"But I'm sure they can bounce back. It's their away form that has been a hindrance. Expectations there are high – you have to be in the top three or four."

"They might not be coping too well at the moment but I'm sure they will bounce back."

Fears

Wigan boss Paul Jewell has warned his troops to beware a backlash. The former Anfield reserve fears his players could be made to pay at the hands of Steven Gerrard and Co.

Jewell said: "Peter Crouch hadn't scored last season before we played them and then he broke his duck against us. Now Liverpool come to our place without an away win."

"You can't really say it's a good time to be playing them because they are a top team with top players."



FLYING PENNANT: Jermaine tumbles while battling with PSV Eindhoven's Csaba Feher



G-WHIZ: Gerrard holds off Pompey's Manuel Fernandes

Ger into 'em just like Steven

RAFA BENITEZ has ordered his Liverpool players to follow Steven Gerrard's lead – just a week after disagreeing about his skipper's form.

The Anfield boss insisted that he was building the England midfielder up not knocking him down when he told him he still had to realise his potential.

And he is clearly delighted with the response from the man who was an inspirational figure in the Champions League and FA Cup successes of the past two seasons.

Pushing

Liverpool are desperate for a first Premiership away win of the season at Wigan today and Benitez stressed: "I'm particularly pleased with Steven Gerrard, who is pushing everyone on at the moment and being a leader."

"He is taking responsibility. He is saying to the others 'follow me' and now all the players must see his example and do the same."

"Earlier in the season people were saying he was not at his best and now

■ by CHRIS HARPER

he is playing very well. With players like Gerrard, Jamie Carragher and Xabi Alonso, I know when they lead the other players will follow them and they will take us in the right direction."

Alonso is fit to return from a leg injury and takes his place in the centre of midfield with Carragher reverting to the centre of defence after answering an SOS to move forward in Wednesday's goalless draw at home to Portsmouth.

Benitez said: "Xabi would have been a risk on Wednesday but he's been doing more exercises and now he's okay."

"Carra had a good game but it was a lot different for him. It's clear Xabi's

passing is very important for the team." Liverpool beat Wigan home and away last season but Benitez doesn't underestimate the size of the task at the JJB Stadium.

The Spaniard added: "It's clear that we are creating a lot of chances but if you want to win you need to score – and most of the time you need to score first."

"Wigan are a very difficult team to play against because they are physical and well-organised. Last season we won 1-0 but it was difficult."

Wales striker Craig Bellamy is certain to play a part after being cleared of assault in Cardiff on Wednesday.

Bellamy has scored just twice since his £6m summer move from Blackburn.

**SERIOUSLY
football****Fellow Arsenal legend urges under-fire Henry****French ace is a goner**

From Back Page
to Chelsea and Manchester United. Instead, the Arsenal boss only brought in William Gallas, Tomas Rosicky and Julio Baptista.

Arsenal trail Manchester United by 16 points in the title race but Wenger yesterday insisted again that he won't try to strengthen in the transfer window next month. "I will do it my way," he said, insisting he had faith in his inexperienced youngsters.

It's not known what Henry and Wenger argued about but the 29-year-old's discontent has alerted Barcelona, who came so close to signing him in the summer.

Chelsea would also love to take

Henry, who signed a new four-year deal after snubbing Barca but the Gunners would hate to see him go to their bitter London rivals.

Wenger admitted Henry had been fit on Wednesday when he put in a lacklustre display — apart from his disallowed goal — in the 2-1 defeat at Fulham.

Problem

He has scored just once in his last seven appearances for Arsenal and has admitted he does not enjoy playing as the lone striker.

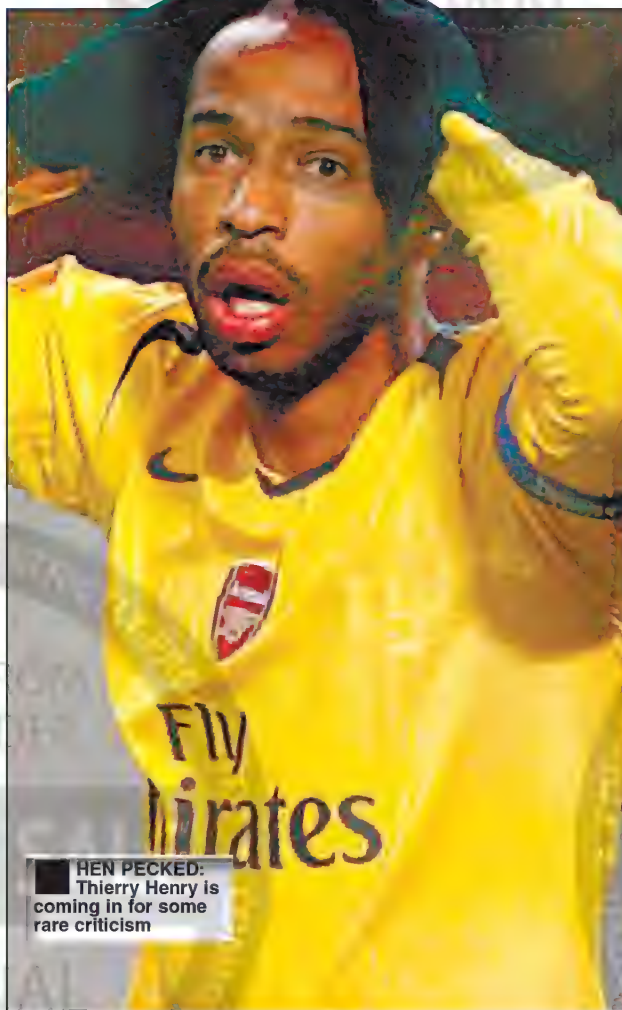
"On Wednesday Thierry was fit but he had a problem on Thursday, Friday," said Wenger last night. "It's the sciatic nerve. He is

suspended for the game against Porto on Wednesday so it gives him some time to cure."

Henry's new role as a lone striker is not to his taste. Last month he said: "It is way harder. You're surrounded by two defenders in front of you and two at the back.

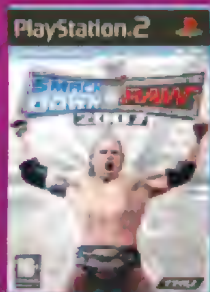
"Usually, you cannot trick them because there is another one running behind. It is difficult."

Wenger admitted he could understand why people like former boss George Graham were doubting his team. "At the moment it looks a little bit that maybe I don't know where I want this team to go but they will get where I want them to go," he said.

TAKE

HEN PECKED:
Thierry Henry is coming in for some rare criticism

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My derby fear

NORTH LONDON legend Ian Wright is desperately worried Tottenham can pull off a shock win today.

Because, he believes, Arsenal's foreign legion haven't a clue about the importance of the derby.

At best, the Gunners are set to start with just two Englishmen at the Emirates — but it's unlikely boss Arsene Wenger will risk 17-year-old Theo Walcott in such a pressure match.

Nervous

And Wright admitted he feared the current squad did not comprehend just how devastated Arsenal fans would be if they lost at home to Spurs for the first time in the Premiership since 1993.

"I am so nervous they are going to beat us in the first Tottenham-Arsenal derby

■ by DAVID WOODS

at the Emirates," confessed Wright. "When I was playing 13 to 14 years ago it was two proper London teams. There were probably a couple of guys from up north but they soon got into the rivalry."

"At Arsenal, maybe we've lost that intensity a bit more than Tottenham. At Arsenal, they talk about there being bigger games to worry about."

"But for me, Arsenal versus Spurs was always the biggest game of the season."

"You just don't want them beating you on your own patch. With the nucleus of English players we had, that was enough to make sure you didn't want to lose it."

"Now, with so few English players in the squad, you don't know how much they are into that."

to go out and make mugs of his critics

THE FLAK THE TERRIV!

EXCLUSIVE
by DAVID WOODS

IAN WRIGHT last night told fellow Arsenal hero Thierry Henry he needs to learn how to accept criticism and use it to fire him on to even greater heights.

Wright, in his role as a BBC Match of the Day pundit, questioned the attitude of the Gunners skipper after the recent defeat at West Ham.

He claimed there were "games where he is starting with his mood in the tunnel" and that Henry "started with no hunger, no intensity, no focus - it didn't seem like he was right at it".

Wright - who took his fair share of stick from pundits in his playing days - confessed that Henry was upset at his comments.

But he insisted: "I just had to be honest and when I pundit I tell it how I see it. And he was having a bad game."

"He mentioned afterwards that if I'd played in the latter stages of the World Cup and Champions League I might have been tired as well."

Knock

"I could take that as a dig but I didn't because nobody likes their form or the way they're playing to be brought into question."

"Of course he was upset and it would have been nice of him to have called me and told me. In the end he did and it was fine."

"All I did was say it how it is. What people have to realise is that on Match of the Day they were trying to get something from me, the former Arsenal top goalscorer, on him, the current top goalscorer, having a little dip in form."

"That makes a talking point and he's got to realise that."

"I've had many opportunities to say something derogatory about him over the years, but I never."

"So why would I at this stage, after all these years, start to knock him?"

"But I'm going to tell him he's playing badly if he's playing badly, because I care."

It's been a bad week for Henry.

Arsenal followed last Saturday's defeat at Bolton with another setback at Fulham in midweek when Henry had a goal disallowed.

Now a neck injury keeps him out of today's big north London clash at home to Tottenham.

Wright has become close to the Frenchman but he admitted Henry was a complicated character.

He explained: "If you catch him on the wrong day he takes things the wrong way. On another day he'll



Says IAN WRIGHT

say 'Wrighty, you're completely right'. But I'd never want any sort of altercation with Thierry because I have a lot of respect for him."

"He's being very protective about it because the expectations for Thierry are set very high - not least by himself."

"More often than not he reaches them and surpasses them and I think he should have won the World Player of the Year at least once in the two years he went up for it."

"I presented the last two and he was second on both occasions."

"On the first occasion, I thought he won it hands-down but they gave it to Ronaldinho."

"To not win the European Ballon D'Or now, after going to the World Cup final and Champions League final, is also harsh."

"Fabio Cannavaro's won it. He was the World Cup-winning captain but a defender doesn't usually get the award and maybe politics were involved."

Wright advised Henry to use any doubts voiced about him to spur him on - just like he did.

"Great players can take criticism because they know what they can come back with," he said.

"I had my fair share of criticism and I found goals always answered anything thrown at me."

Teased

"I used to feel I was constantly proving myself at England level."

"I always had doubts about my temperament and claims that I was past it."

"I had away fans booing me every touch."

"I had them cheering and jeering every time - the referee spoke to me after a tackle."

"They'd laugh at me every time I lost the ball and cheer when I was tackled."

"That is pressure all the time so, when I scored, that's why I celebrated like I did and teased them back because that was the only time I could express myself after all the s*** I got."

"You just answer with goals."

Wright added: "You always know a chance is going to come along and if you score you shut them up. It was a test of my character that I passed."

"Sometimes I went a bit over the edge and deserved the criticism I got but sometimes I didn't."



I suffered in silence

MARTIN JOL revealed his secret pain over the day Arsenal stole Spurs' Champions League place - which stunned him into silence for THREE WEEKS.

Tottenham boss Jol, who bids to crack his club's derby hoodoo at the Emirates Stadium today, admitted he was so shocked by the last game of last season he didn't even want to talk to his wife.

Dutch coach Jol also disclosed the disastrous 2-1 defeat at West Ham - which gifted the Gunners fourth spot by two points - is the only game of his 15-year managerial career he has NEVER watched on video.

But now the boss is hoping for a blockbuster victory to end Spurs' unlucky 13-year run without a win at Arsenal.

"Last season, we were fourth from December - but that changed in the last game of the season," Jol said.

Tried

"On that day and in those circumstances, with nine players out ill, I was very disappointed."

"I watch all games on video but not that game. I tried to forget it as soon as possible - but it wasn't easy."

"It took a couple of weeks to get over it and I didn't want to talk to other people for three weeks."

Despite his heart-break, Jol reckons the May defeat at West Ham was a landmark for Spurs - because Arsenal realised that, after years of dominance, their rivals were a genuine threat.

Information Station

FOOTBALL
FA Cup 2nd round
Bradford (0) 0 Millwall (0) 0
Alt: 4.34p
King's Lynn (0) 0 Oldham (1) 2
Alt: 5.73p
Porter 10 Hal 82
Stockport (1) 2 Wycombe (1) 1
Alt: 3.82p
Proudlock 43 (pen), 75
Easter 34
Nationwide North: Leigh 1PM 2 Hyde 0.

BASKETBALL
BBL Trophy: Chester Jets 100
Coventry Crusaders 78.

CRICKET
Third Test (day 5 of 5) Karachi:
Pakistan 304 (Yousuf 102) & 399-6dec
(Yousuf 124, Hafeez 104, Inzamam 58no),
West Indies 280 (Garrner 81, Ramdin 50,
Gul 4-79) & 244 (Chanderpaul 69).
Pakistan bt West Indies by 189 runs and
win series 3-0.
Twenty20 International (1-day)
Johannesburg: South Africa 128-9, India
127-4, India bt South Africa by 6 wickets.

GOLF
New Zealand Open (Auckland) - 2nd
round scores (GB & Irl unless stated):
135 N Dougherty, W Grunby (Aus); 136 M
Campbell (Nz); 137 S Strange (Aus).
Sunshine Tour (Sun City, South Africa)
- 2nd round scores (GB & Irl unless
stated): 134 J Furuk (US); 138 H Stenson
(Swe); 139 C Schwartzel (Rsa), E Els
(Rsa).

MOTOR RACING
World Rally Championship round 16,
Wales Rally GB (Cardiff) Leading
positions after 1st day: 1 M Gronholm
(Fin) Ford 1hr 14mins 51.9secs, 2 P
Solberg (Nor) Subaru 1hr 17.7, 3 M Stohl
(Aut) Peugeot 1:15.40.0.

RUGBY UNION
EDF Energy Cup
Group B
Cardiff Blues 31 London Irish 7
Cardiff Blues - T: Williams, Czekaj 2.
Pen: Blair 4. Con: Blair 2. London Irish -
T: Bishop. Con: Geraighy. HT 21-7.
Alt: 7.24p.

Magners League
Edinburgh 17 Borders 3
Edinburgh - T: Jacobsen, Cairns. Pen:
Paterson. Con: Paterson 2. Borders -
Pen: MacRae. HT 10-0. Alt: 2.13p.

TENNIS
Davis Cup World Group Final
(Moscow, Russia) - Russia v Argentina:
N Davydenko (Rus) bt J J Chela (Arg) 6-1
6-2 5-7 6-4. D Nalbandian (Arg) bt M Salin
(Rus) 6-4 6-4 6-4. Match tied at 1-1.

TODAY'S DIARY
FOOTBALL
(3pm unless stated)
Nationwide North: Barrow v Workop,
Gainsborough v Farsley Celtic, Hucknall v
Moor Green, Kettering v Redditch,
Lancaster City v Droylsden, Nuneaton v
Hargreave Town, Scarborough v Hinckley
Utd, Salford City v Worcester, Vauxhall
Motors v Alfreton Town, Workington v Blyth
Spartans.

Nationwide South: Bedford Town v
Lewes, Braintree Town v Havant &
Waterlooville, Exeter City v Bognor Regis
Town, Sutton Utd v Bishop's Cleeve,
Thurrock v Cambridge City, Welling v
Newport County, Weston-Super-Mare v
Farnborough, Yeading v Histon.

Premier Division: Bath v Halesowen,
Chester v Team Bath, Cirencester v
Henley, Hemel Hempstead v Clevedon Town v
Merthyr, Corby v Mangotsfield, Gloucester
v Banbury, Hitchin v Tipton, Northwood v
Chipperton, Rugby Town v Maidenhead
Utd, Stamford v Walsingham.

Premier Division: AFC
Wimbledon v Horsham, Ashford Town v

Harrow Borough, Boreham Wood v
Staines Town, East Thurrock v Tonbridge
Angels, Hampton & Richmond v
Folkestone Invicta, Hendon v Slough,
Heybridge v Bromley, Leyton v Ramsgate,
Margate v Cantharoth Ath, Walton &
Herstham v Chelmsford, Worthing v
Biltenham.

ICE HOCKEY
Harrow Borough, Boreham Wood v
Staines Town, East Thurrock v Tonbridge
Angels, Hampton & Richmond v
Folkestone Invicta, Hendon v Slough,
Heybridge v Bromley, Leyton v Ramsgate,
Margate v Cantharoth Ath, Walton &
Herstham v Chelmsford, Worthing v
Biltenham.

BASKETBALL
BBL Championship: London United v
Milton Keynes (7.45pm).

CRICKET
Triangular Tournament (1-day)
Benoni: Bermuda v Holland (8am).

GOLF
New Zealand Open (Auckland).
Sunshine Tour (Sun City, South Africa).

MOTOR RACING
World Rally Championship round 16,
Wales Rally GB (Cardiff).

RUGBY UNION
EDF Energy Cup
Group A
Gloucester v Bath (5.30pm)

Ospreys v Bristol (5.30pm)
Group C
Newcastle v Harlequins (2.30pm)

Salv v Llanelli Scarlets (2.30pm)
Group D
Northampton v Leicester (3pm)

Worcester v N-G Dragons (3pm)
Magners League
Ulster v Leinster (7.30pm)

SNOOKER
Premier League: Sheffield Weekend
(The Forum Centre, Wythenshawe).

TENNIS
Davis Cup World Group Final
(Moscow, Russia): Russia v Argentina.

TOMORROW
BASKETBALL
BBL Championship: Chester v
Plymouth (5.30pm), London United v
Worcester (6.30pm), Scottish Rocks v
Leicester (5pm).

CRICKET
Fifth ODI (1-day) Centurion Park:
South Africa v India (8am).

Second ODI (1-day) Bogra:
Bangladesh v Zimbabwe (7.30am).

ICE HOCKEY
Elite League: Coventry v Nottingham
(5pm), Newcastle v Cardiff (5.30pm),
Sheffield v Basingstoke (6pm), Edinburgh
v Manchester (6pm), Hull v Belfast (6pm).

MOTOR RACING
World Rally Championship round 16,
Wales Rally GB (Cardiff).

RUGBY UNION
Magners League
Ulster v Leinster (7.30pm)

TENNIS
Davis Cup World Group Final
(Moscow, Russia): Russia v Argentina.

YESTERDAY'S SPORTSWOOD
ACROSS: 1 Wales, 4 Boris, 7 All, 8
Smith, 9 Sonia, 10 Sale, 11 Lehman,
14 Howard, 15 Reds, 16 Young, 20
Aaron, 21 Hal, 22 Scott, 23 Ewell.

DOWN: 1 Wasps, 2 Laidlaw, 3 Saha, 4
Bisley, 5 Run, 6 Spain, 12 McEnroe, 13
Wright, 14 Hayes, 16 Sunil, 17 Hale, 19
Ugo.

FIVE FOR FUN ANSWERS
1 Robbie Keane, 2 George Eastang, 3
Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, 4
Vancouver, 5 Boston Crab.

Adam's Phil worry

by JEREMY CROSS

ADAM PEARSON last night admitted he might have made a mistake when he appointed Phil Parkinson as Hull manager.

Tigers chairman Pearson paid Colchester £400,000 compensation to lure Parkinson to the KC Stadium in the summer as replacement for Peter Taylor.

Sack

But Parkinson has endured a nightmare start to the season and is facing the sack just four months later. Pearson backed his under-fire boss last month and insisted he would give him as long as it took to turn things round.

But Hull have won just four games all season and were thrashed 5-1 at Parkinson's former club in midweek. Fans have been calling

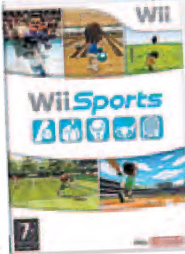
for his head and even Pearson himself is now doubting the wisdom of his decision.

A defeat at home to Southampton today would spell the end for Parkinson and Pearson said: "What happened in midweek was embarrassing."

"Now I have to decide if I made the right decision appointing the manager."

LEICESTER boss Rob Kelly fears his side could be stuck in the relegation zone by the time Milan Mandaric completes his takeover.

They face Sheffield Wednesday today on the back of a run of just one point from five games, with Mandaric's £25m takeover still at least three weeks away.



Ian Wright is endorsing Wii Sports on Wii, the home entertainment console from Nintendo. Wii will be launched in the UK next Friday and will retail at £179.

SERIOUSLY
football

Old Trafford coup as former Barcelona and

5
FERGIE
GAMBLES

LAURENT BLANC (free)

Fergie had been after this classy central defender for years. He finally got him at the tail end of his career and although Blanc collected a Premiership medal it was clear he was past his best.

Hit or Miss: MISS

ERIC CANTONA (£1.2m)

Possibly Fergie's finest signing. Took the team, and club, to a new level and was a key figure in a series of memorable triumphs. Also inspired United's golden generation of youngsters to new heights.

HIT

DION DUBLIN (£1m)

Plucked from Cambridge when Fergie was facing another striker crisis. Made an early impact then suffered badly broken leg that effectively ended his United career. Brief comeback at club before going on to enjoy greater success elsewhere.

MISS

ANDY GORAM (Free)

Shock arrival as emergency keeper cover. Famously thought it was a wind-up when Fergie phoned asking him to sign. Only ever a short-term signing.

MISS

WILLIAM PRUNIER (Free)

Another emergency signing, the Frenchman was said to be a mate of Eric Cantona's - but probably not after his second game saw United thumped 4-1 at Spurs. Not surprisingly never played again.

MISS

TARGET MAN: Henrik Larsson playing with Barcelona and (right) Celtic and scoring Sweden's second against England to earn a 2-2 draw in the World Cup

LARSSON
FACTFILE

1986: Joins hometown club Helsingborg after playing with Hogaborg BK from the age of six.

1993: Switches to Feyenoord and makes 100 appearances with two Dutch Cup wins.

1994: Member of Sweden's World Cup squad which finishes third at USA '94.

1997: Joins Celtic for £650,000 after going to court over Feyenoord contract.

1998: Scores 16 league goals to help the Hoops to their first Scottish Premier League title for a decade.

2001: Scores third goal as Celtic beat Old Firm rivals Rangers 3-0 in April to notch 50 goals in a season on way to UEFA Golden Shoe.

2002: Announces his retirement from international football.

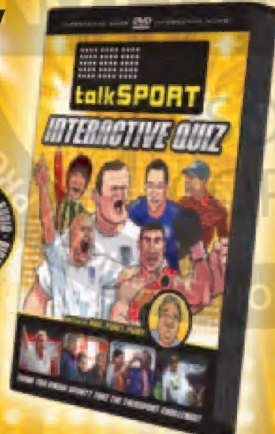
2003: Passes 200 goals for Celtic in UEFA Cup Final 3-2 extra-time defeat by Porto. Joins Barcelona but misses much of season through injury.

2005: Extends contract at Barcelona.

2006: Announces in January that he will leave Barcelona at end of the season and return to Sweden. Scores 10 goals as Barca win La Liga and comes on as sub to play a part in both goals as Barca come from behind to beat Arsenal 2-1 in Champions League Final. Scores against England in World Cup.

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Humble Hen

From Back Page
a major role in United's Premiership title duel with Chelsea.

The United boss said: "I think it's a terrific bit of business for us and we are bringing in someone who can change games."

"He is a great character and I've known about him a long time in terms of his pedigree and in terms of his goal-scoring ability."

"I've always admired him and there was a period when we made some moves for him at Celtic but the manager persuaded him to stay at the time."

And he added: "I am looking at him to be a big influence because I know he can change things at an important stage of the season."

Larsson will join up with his Old Trafford team-mates for training before Christmas.

But red-tape means he will not be able to play in the New Year's Day clash with Newcastle - although he should be available for the FA Cup third round on January 6.

He will then be eligible to play in all United's games - including European games - until he returns to Sweden on March 12.

Celtic boss Gordon Strachan yes-

terday admitted he had considered a bid to re-sign the player, who appeared to have turned his back on the big time when he left Barcelona after collecting a Champions League winners medal against Arsenal in May.

And Ferguson admitted he had written off the deal until his scouts in Sweden suggested a short-term arrangement could be fixed.

The United boss added: "We looked around and this was by far the best option open to us."

Pleased

"You saw him in the Champions League Final against Arsenal this year when I think he won the game for Barcelona. He changed things completely around for them. So we are very pleased."

"I think experience does count, particularly in the run-in. And I've said all along that when it gets down to that bit of the battle it's down to a lot of things, experience, nerves and things like that."

"Players like Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Gary Neville, and Ole Solskjaer will be invaluable - and adding Henrik Larsson to that won't do our chances any harm at all."

Celtic striker agrees to 10-week loan deal

**BARCLAYS
PREMIERSHIP**

I'LL SCORE GOALS FOR FUN, FERGIE

Says new United hitman HENRIK LARSSON

■ by DAVE ARMITAGE

OLD gunslinger Henrik Larsson has warned the Premiership's top defenders he's aiming to be scoring for fun.

The 35-year-old hitman will join Manchester United on loan in January for 10 weeks and admits he can't wait to test his goal prowess on the most demanding stage of all.

Larsson's striking exploits are the stuff of legend in a goal-laden career at Celtic and Barcelona.

Now he's intent on having fun as one of the shock moves of the season takes him to Old Trafford's Theatre of Dreams.

He's there as back-up but warns Wayne Rooney and Louis Saha that he's out to get himself a piece of the action.

Strong

And there will be smiles along the way as Larsson says: "I haven't played in the Premiership before although I've obviously faced Premiership sides many times and I know all about the league."

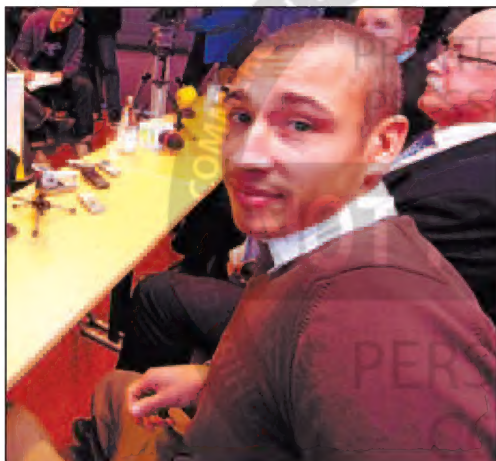
"The Premiership is undoubtedly one of the best leagues in the world and it's a fantastic challenge."

"It's very strong and physically demanding but I know all about that from playing in Scotland. I'm not worried about the physical aspect at all."

"I probably won't play every match from the start but for me it feels like a very fun thing to contribute at such a late stage in my career."

"I'm going there as support but I want to be able to contribute something to United's season so we'll just have to see what happens after I arrive."

"I'm just thrilled to have the chance to play alongside great



RED DEVIL: Larsson reveals all in Helsingborg yesterday

strikers like Rooney and Saha and I know the sort of quality they possess.

"I will go over there to play as much as possible but I have no idea of how the manager wants to use me."

"We will see how much playing time there will be. Am I a back-up? Yes, at the beginning."

"Then you will see what I can contribute and how things are going. We haven't discussed a jersey number at all."

"I am just really excited about the prospect of going to United and I feel quite humbled that such a huge club and great manager are interested in what I can do."

"Obviously it is well known they made inquiries about me in the past when I was at Celtic but

things weren't possible then. So it's great now that I have the opportunity to come to this great club and see what I can do."

"I've played for some wonderful clubs in my career at Feyenoord, Celtic and Barcelona and now it's wonderful that I can get the chance to go to Old Trafford even if it's just for a short time."

"I know all about United's history and traditions and it's a honour to be able to be a part of that."

"It's a huge club and I'm really looking forward to playing in front of the home fans. It's during Helsingborg's close season and it will keep me really match fit for the start of next season."

"I'm aware it's unlikely I'll be starting every game while I'm

there. I'm going there to do my best and attempt to fulfil my role Sir Alex Ferguson wants for me."

"All I can do is my best and at the end of the three months I would like to look back and think that I had added something and helped United to have a successful season."

But one man who knows Larsson closely has warned Rooney and Saha they will have to hang on to their United shirts tighter than ever.

Aston Villa boss Martin O'Neill knows Larsson better than most and reckons his former Celtic star won't settle for warming the bench at Old Trafford.

O'Neill says: "Larsson is only concerned with playing and scoring goals. I think his only gripe at Barcelona was that he wanted to play every single game."

"When you have players like Samuel Eto'o and Ronaldinho in the same squad it's not always that easy."

Fantastic

"But I can see exactly why United want him. Make no mistake, Larsson will want to be in the side. He will try and force his way in and want to stay there, which is as it should be."

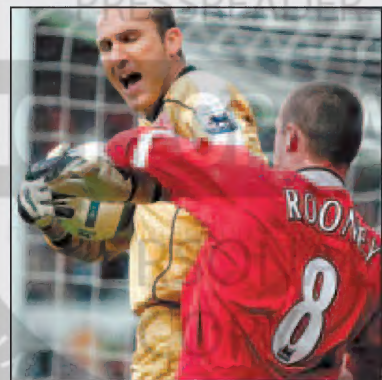
"He will do his utmost to keep those players out of the side while he is there."

"He could prove to be a very good short-term signing for United. Don't worry about his age — he's naturally lean and fit."

O'Neill wasn't upset that he hadn't been able to secure the Swede's services, adding: "I'm not puffed in the slightest."

"If Manchester United come calling I think things can get put on the back burner. You can put breakfast and dinner on hold when a club like that comes in."

"He's in fantastic condition and United know exactly what they are getting."



IT'S MINE: Schwarzer tangles with Rooney

Mark: We know how to stop 'em

MIDDLESBROUGH keeper Mark Schwarzer believes Manchester United have rediscovered the deadly form which won them the Treble seven years ago.

But the Aussie reckons Boro are just the team to topple Sir Alex Ferguson's table-toppers when they clash at the Riverside tonight.

Boro have a habit of spiking the big guns on Teesside and, having gone 300 minutes without conceding a goal, they are ready to do it again.

Twelve months ago, a Gaizka Mendieta-inspired Boro ran United ragged, thrashing them 4-1 — a result which prompted Roy Keane's sensational MUTV rant against his team-mates.

And in 2006, they have already handed out successive beatings to Jose Mourinho's Chelsea.

Schwarzer claims United are in their sights once more, though he accepts this latest mission could be their toughest yet.

Happy

"United seem to have got back to the form they had six or seven years ago when they were phenomenal," he said.

"From what I've seen of them so far this season, they're touching those heights again and are performing in the same way they did when they were dominating everything."

"Not only do they have fantastic players, they play unbelievably attractive football and are picking up the right results."

"That's why they are top and it's why Chelsea were probably happy with a draw at Old Trafford last Sunday."

"United had to raise the bar because of Chelsea but they seem to have done that this season."

"They are getting back to overpowering teams scoring goals and outplaying opponents the way they used to."

But Schwarzer is adamant that Boro's impressive record against the Premiership elite means they are

■ by IAN MURTAGH

well-equipped to cope with an in-form United.

"Just remember they were at the top of their game last season and we beat them so hopefully it will be the same again."

"We always do well against the big teams. Maybe it's because they always like to dominate which opens the game up and gives us a chance."

Schwarzer has warned Boro fans that there's no entertainment guarantee on offer.

He explained: "The big question is do you entertain and get relegated like we did in 1997? Fans still say that was the best entertainment they've ever seen here."

System

"Sometimes you just have to grind out 1-0s rather than keep losing 3-2. Of course, we want to entertain but it's not always possible."

Boro chief Gareth Southgate insisted England international Stewart Downing is not guaranteed a recall.

Downing missed last week's 1-1 draw at Aston Villa through injury but Southgate was so impressed with the way his players responded to a change in system, he could retain a 3-5-2 formation against United.

And that would leave Downing odd man out.



ALL SMILES: Happy Henrik Larsson yesterday

At Larss... United get their man

TRANSFER STUNNER

SHOCKED Henrik Larsson admitted last night he was humbled by the prospect of joining Manchester United.

The Swedish striker is on his way to Old Trafford on a short-term deal after United boss Sir Alex Ferguson pulled off the transfer stunner of the season.

Larsson, 35, will join for 10 weeks - starting in January in time for the FA Cup third round - on £60,000-a-week while his full-time club Heilsborg sits out the Swedish winter break.

The United boss - who tried to sign Larsson when the forward was at Celtic - has been desperate to strengthen his attacking options.

Excited

But the Scot's decision to turn to the ageing striker is bound to raise eyebrows - despite Larsson's match-winning display for Barcelona in last season's Champions League Final.

Larsson said: "I am really excited about the prospect and I feel quite humbled that such a huge club and great manager are interested in what I

by IAN WINROW

can do. I haven't spoken with the Sir Alex Ferguson in detail about how he wants to use me, but I'm aware it's unlikely I'll be starting every game.

"I'm going there to do my best and attempt to fulfill any role the coach wants for me.

"I'm going there as support but I want to be able to contribute something to United's season."

And Fergie is convinced the experienced striker will play

Turn to Page 70

ANOTHER MEGA EXCLUSIVE



by DAVID WOODS

THIERRY HENRY'S Arsenal future is in doubt after he stormed away from training yesterday following a bust-up with boss Arsene Wenger.

Henry quit the Gunners' base at London Colney in Hertfordshire before 11am, when training starts.

Yesterday boss Wenger said Henry was out of today's big North London derby with Tottenham at the Emirates with a sciatic nerve, although the striker had been expecting to play.

But it is understood he would have been expected to have some treatment or do light training before being allowed home.

Departure

Privately, Henry has become increasingly disillusioned with the weakness of a squad packed full of youngsters.

He has told friends he thinks the current team is a pale shadow of previous squads, following the departure of big-name international stars like Patrick Vieira, Robert Pires, Sol Campbell, Edu, Jose Reyes and Ashley Cole and the retirement of Dennis Bergkamp.

Henry hoped Wenger would boost his squad in the summer to mount a challenge

Turn to Page 68

FLARE-UP:
Arsenal boss Wenger clashed with skipper Henry before training